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1864.  
The great supper





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THE  
GREAT SUPPER;  
OR  
AN ILLUSTRATION AND DEFENCE  
OF THE LEADING  
DOCTRINES OF GRACE;  
IN THREE DISCOURSES,  
ON LUKE XIV. 16—24.

BY THE  
REV. ASHBEL G. FAIRCHILD, D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY THE  
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Prof. in the Western Theological Seminary.

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PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

THE

GREAT SEPPER

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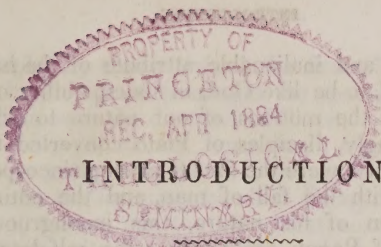
DOCTRINES OF GRACE

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It is common to call the Calvinistic system, by way of reproach, "an old philosophy." But it is the singular felicity of Calvinism, to see all the reproaches, with which it was ever assailed, recoil upon the authors, with double confusion. In this instance, faithful history can show, that the old and vain speculations which prevailed in the world under the name of philosophy, till the time of Francis Bacon, were always inimical to the doctrines now called Calvinistic; and that Arminianism is the child of Pagan philosophy, brought in, first, by speculative men, who laboured to make Plato and the Bible mean the same thing. The God of Plato is not sovereign in the universe; evil exists in spite of his will; it is mixed up, of necessity, in the best ordered creation: and we are called to work with Him, in advancing our nature from the imperfection of its original make. The will has a self-determining power; it is a spark of divinity in man, which can receive no disability from any primitive corruption of the soul; this corruption is only in the flesh, where evil exists independently of God; and it is the

essential and inalienable attribute of the human will, to be like God, in its capability of subduing the motions of our nature to evil. Accordingly, disciples of Plato converted to Christianity, were the first to attempt incorporating with the fall of man, and the entire corruption of his nature, this incongruous dogma of Pagan philosophy—the self-determining power of the human will. Justin Martyr was one of the first converts from Plato to Christ; and he was the first, as far as history informs us, to teach Arminian doctrine. “He seems to have been the first of all sincere Christians,” says Milner, “who introduced this foreign plant into Christian ground.” He would never quit the company of heathen philosophers, nor put off the badges with which they were distinguished, nor assume the ministry of the gospel, for which his abilities were suited. He loved Plato all his life, and even at the close of his second Apology declared, that the doctrines of this Pagan master, and those of Jesus Christ, were “only not altogether similar”—that is, substantially the same. Though in the end he had courage to lay down his life for Christianity, that life, while he had it, was not a pure consecration; and the pride of opinion, and zeal for a philosopher’s cloak, tinged even the glory of his martyrdom. We honour his memory, and prize the noble Apologies he made to the Antonines, in behalf of the Christians; but weakness of judgment, confusion of thought, looseness of logic, and ignorance of Scripture, un-

doubtedly characterized the first philosopher who attempted to mingle the speculations of Plato with the doctrine of Christ.

“We shall see hereafter,” says Milner, “the progress of the evil, and its full maturity under the fostering hand of Pelagius.” It is well known too, that the great corruption of Christianity by superstition, which began in the second and third centuries, and continued to spoil it until all was lost in darkness and apostasy, originated from the Platonic philosophy. Exorcism and purgatory, worship of saints and images and relics, “forbidding to marry” and “abstaining from meats,” all sprung mainly from that source.

In the third century, the Arminian doctrine of free will derived from Plato, was received, as far as we can see, universally among the learned Christians, who had studied in the schools of that age; and foremost of all, in explaining and applying it, was Origen. He had a giant’s intellect. In his hands, free-will was carried out to its length and its breadth: and let us see, in this example, once for all, how a master mind can and must develope this first principle of Arminians. If free-will, as it is, in their sense, be essential to moral and intelligent beings in the present life, it must be so in any other life, past or future. No change of condition can change the self-determining nature of the will, in responsible creatures, whether men or angels. Consequently, the end of the present probation is only the beginning of another; for the will

cannot cease to have its self-determining power, in the future state, without ceasing to be the will of an accountable being. It follows, of course, that hell is only a purgatory, for the wills imprisoned there may determine to cease from evil and do good; and that Heaven is only another Eden, where glorified wills may determine to rebel again, and fall from their high estate. What is true of men must be true of angels also, for they possess the same self-determination of the will, being moral and accountable creatures. Devils are therefore in a state of mere disciplinary punishment, and holy angels are in a state of unconfirmed and unconfirmable probation. The former may rise to glory, the latter may sink to perdition: and thus on through all eternity before us, free-wills are rising, and free-wills are falling. Self-determination emancipates hell, or depopulates heaven, according to the whim of its own spontaneity.

But this is not all. What is true of the eternity that is to come, is true of the eternity that is past. We are only in the midst of ceaseless progression and change. The souls that inhabit these bodies have been imprisoned here, for offences committed in a previous state of existence. Better tenements were once the habitation of these god-like spirits; perhaps ærial bodies, subtle, refined, angelic. But in consequence of free-will going astray, men have been degraded to bodies of grosser workmanship; and if the present probation be rightly improved, the felicity of a future



resurrection will consist, not in the restoration of this identical body, but of that which we had lost, in the degradation from a prior investment.

Thus dreamed the mighty Origen. His brain, pre-occupied with the Arminian or Platonic notion of free-will, was compelled, by its own surpassing activity, to carry out this notion to complete development. The pre-existence of souls, the restoration of all apostate spirits, the insecurity of heaven, the instability of hell, were logical deductions, by his understanding, from this seminal error. And so were many other radical perversions of Christian truth. Holding such a doctrine respecting the will, he failed in just apprehension of sin, its demerit, its consequences, its need of vicarious and infinite expiation, and of course the necessity of Godhead in the Saviour : and then he discoursed of order and subordination among the persons of the Trinity, till his writings became the text-book of Arians in the subsequent age.

In the fifth century, there was some revival of Apostolic Christianity, by the labours of Augustine, pastor of the church at Hippo in Africa. This eminent father, led by the Spirit of God, and alarmed by the heresy of Pelagius, returned to the simplicity of the gospel, rejected the philosophy and vain deceit which had spoiled generations before him, and again proclaimed salvation by free and sovereign grace. He did not indeed attain the clearness of Luther and Calvin, in the doc-

trine of justification ; and he was no little enfeebled by the superstition of his age ; but he was immeasurably the best, of all the fathers, the last of them, if not first also, that understood the gospel, the great link between apostles and reformers, the destroyer of Pelagianism, the fearless advocate of grace, in election, effectual calling, and perseverance of the saints. His writings were the light of many ages. For a thousand years, they glimmered on the darkness, and all the piety and zeal that were worthy of the gospel kindled at their torch. Rome could never bear this light. Compelled, as she was, to reverence Augustine, because he had crushed so many heresies, and healed so many schisms ; because his praise was in the Churches, and his books were the pride of theological literature, yet the multitude were always tutored to reject his doctrines. Salvation by absolute grace was bane to superstition, and will-worship, and the innumerable forms of meritorious working which characterize apostate religion. The Monks especially, saw at once, that the doctrines of election, original sin, man's inability, Christ's imputed righteousness, &c., which Augustine taught, would cut up their glory at the roots ; and they combined almost universally to resist this revival of truth. Hating the doctrines of grace, and yet afraid of Pelagian heresy under anathema, they devised a middle system, by which they might escape the curse of the Church pronounced on Pelagianism, and yet retain the self-right-

eousness which constituted the life of monasticism. The author of this system was John Cassian, a monk of Marseilles, who had come from the East, imbued with the doctrines of Origen, and devoted to every form of existing superstition; a man, whose morality was as loose at the foundation, as his divinity, for he taught with zeal, that it is right to lie in promoting a good end. This was the champion of monkery against Augustine, and the first man who gave system to Arminianism; a system which, from the time of Cassian down to that of Arminius, was called Semi-Pelagianism. There is nothing new in the malice of error. The very same reproaches, misrepresentations, and horrible consequences, that are now cast on the doctrines of grace, the monks thought it good policy to cast on the teaching of Augustine. It need hardly be stated that in such a time as the dark ages, and in such a church as Papal Rome, and with such an army as monks and nuns to support it, Semi-Pelagianism would prevail triumphantly.

From the rise of this system till the dawn of the Reformation, there was but one brief period of evangelical light. Charlemagne, and his sons, were exceedingly anxious to reform the Church; and by munificent exertions, they procured accurate and multiplied copies of the Scriptures, and rewarded the study of them with princely gifts and honourable distinction. The Bible is never sown without a harvest. Pious and learned men

sprung up in great number. There was Ansharius in the North of Europe, a missionary worthy of Apostolic times. There was Claudius of Turin in the South of Europe, who with many others, struggled to reform the age, and roll back the ignorance and error which had come in like a flood. In this galaxy of the ninth century, lighted up for a little by an opened Bible, we must not omit the name of Gotteschalch, a Saxon of noble birth, who, by the mistaken piety of his dying father, had been consigned, in his infancy, to a convent for life. When mature in age, he wished to escape from monastic chains, and return to the duties and decencies of secular life. But his Abbot, Rabanus Maurus, defeated his wish, and contracted towards the impatient victim a hatred, which was afterwards shamefully signalized, when Rabanus had become Archbishop of Mentz, and Gotteschalch an ardent disciple of Augustine.

The latter was arraigned for heresy, because he taught the doctrines now called Calvinism: and let us glance, a moment, at the adversaries who sat in judgment upon him. There was Rabanus Maurus, the most learned man of his age, in that "old philosophy," which had sprung from the head of Plato, and spawned the corruptions that now overwhelmed the Church. There was Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims, a finished man of the world, a shrewd politician, and a supple courtier, whose skill in flattery and heartless intrigue gave him power with princes. There was



John Scot Erigena, another consummate sycophant in courts, who also was a great philosopher of the day, the oldest father of the Schoolmen who compounded from Plato, and Aristotle, and the Christian Mystics, a complete system of Pantheism. And there was Paschase Radbert, the Monk who invented *transubstantiation* for the Catholics, and fitted up the "old philosophy" for a special defence of this outrage on common sense. These were the prominent foes of Gotteschalc and his doctrine. These were the men, who had him whipped and scourged, degraded from the priesthood, and thrown into a miserable dungeon, to finish his days.

A host of humble Christians rose up to vindicate his cause, though without power to save his person from the hands of his enemies. In three successive Synods, held in the South of France, and composed of the most faithful ministers in that age, his doctrines were approved, and the persecution employed to crush him was indignantly denounced. Thenceforward truth made her home in the territory of these Synods. For nearly 700 years her lamp flickered there, while gross darkness covered the world besides. There every inch of ground was stained with the blood of witnesses. There the horrid Inquisition was founded. There the direst anathemas of Rome were accumulated. Curse followed curse, till she gathered all the ferocious bigotry of Europe there, and by legions of crusaders against the Albigenes, by all the horrors

of blood and devastation which fondle in her heart, she could hardly tear from the bosom of France what Gotteschalc had planted, by the word of his testimony, and the hour of his tribulation.

We pass many an important event in the ages intervening, and come down to the Synod of Dort, in 1618—a memorable epoch, when Semi-Pelagianism, having crept out from the exclusive keeping of monkery and Molinism, was detected in efforts to penetrate the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Arminius was the man for such a work. Gifted, plausible, and restless, having purity enough in his life to inspire confidence, and perfidy enough in his heart to practice any kind of means, he succeeded, by vamping it anew, in giving his own name to the system of John Cassian. Writers of the present age, who adopt his views, have laboured to exhibit this same Arminius as a saint and a martyr. But why not tell the whole truth, which authentic history hands down, when justice to others demands it? Like all corrupters of the common faith, this man dissembled profoundly, pretended zeal for the Belgic Confession, while, privately, he laboured in every way to subvert and destroy it. He had drawn on himself the suspicion of many by such dissimulation, when he became a candidate for a vacant chair of Divinity in the University of Leyden. Opposition was made on account of his doubtful theology; but this was removed by the most abundant and solemn protes-

tations of attachment to the very faith he endeavoured to destroy. In that chair he pursued the same course of unprincipled duplicity; and when invited to any public conference, or menaced with any formal prosecution for his errors, he baffled the Belgians with fresh pretences, conspired with leading politicians of the country, and laboured, with increasing exertion, to have a majority at last, when the trial could be no longer evaded. In this condition of deceit, intrigue, anxiety, and effort, he died.

When his successors were ultimately brought before the Synod of Dort, to answer the charge of corrupting the national faith, they demanded the place of accusers; they refused to exhibit any system of their own, but insisted on arraigning the doctrines of Calvin, embodied in the Belgic Confession! Like the Arminians of our own day, these Dutch progenitors were slow to exhibit a system of doctrine; they found it immeasurably easier to batter down, than to build up, and placed all their success in declamatory onslaught. The Synod, of course, refused a demand so disorderly and impudent; and the Arminians retired at once, refusing to answer or explain. Condemned in their absence, they raised a cry of injustice, and posterity repeats that shameless clamour. Every opportunity had been afforded for making full defence, and the tribunal had been summoned by the authority of State, and commanded to hear and try Arminian doctrine: but because they were not

permitted to become accusers instead of accused, they left the Synod in a body, and then denounced the unanimous decision, because they were absent! Such is Arminian probity — such the memorable grievance, which is made the burden of many a bitter invective against Calvinists.

It is true, the venerable Synod of Dort could not be wholly free from the rigour and roughness which belonged to the times; but it is equally true that Arminians more than matched them in severity, wherever they had power. It is true, that politics were mingled with the decision of their cause, and civil penalties followed their condemnation; but it is equally true that the State, not the Synod, was to blame for that persecution. An amiable and eminent prelate from England, Bishop Hall, who had participated in the deliberations, and united in the religious exercises of that Presbyterian Synod, having been sent by his King as a delegate, said, “There was no place upon earth so like heaven as the Synod of Dort, and where he should be more willing to dwell.”

Illustrious men, it is said, took part with the Arminians, and were involved in their condemnation. This is true, but those men belonged to a particular faction in the State, which had linked its cause with the hope of Arminian triumph. The most celebrated was Grotius, a lawyer and statesman, renowned for his genius and learning, but in religion a latitudinarian of the broad Socinian type. He



desired not only to leaven the faith of his country with Semi-Pelagian philosophy, but to substitute prelatic forms of government in the Church, for the republican freedom of Presbytery; and what was worse, he gave the power of his genius, and all the resources of his learning, to a mode of interpretation which was designed to exclude Christ from the Bible, or at least from the prophecies that foretold him. A more skeptical commentator never wrote in Christian ranks; and whatever be the admiration bestowed on him, by the learned of all denominations, his highest praise is found among Socinians in all subsequent ages.

The Arminians, after their condemnation by the Synod of Dort, threw off the mask of attachment to the Belgic Confession, and openly allied themselves with Socinians, and every other kind of rationalistic speculators in religion. When the "old philosophy" of Plato, and Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas had ceased to reign, and could no longer cover with cobwebs the life of semi-pelagianism, it came forth in the garb of *free-thinking*, gloried as the religion of reason, and combined with every speculation, that was bold enough to impugn and despise the faith established by the Reformers. It would be well worth a volume, instead of a few lines, to dwell on that age of Arminianism, which extends from the Synod of Dort, to the conversion of Wesley. Once the darling *middle way* of quiet monks, and now the crowded highway, of noise and heat

and bustle, it was then the common track, of all the indifference and cool speculation, that had scarcely religion enough to wish for heaven.

Wesley's reformation consisted in a divorce which he effected, between Arminianism and Socinianism. The former became the subject of a revival. Ardent, energetic and popular, it could no longer abide the speculating indifference of its old companion, and a separation ensued. Are we wrong in thinking, that the old affinity returns, as often as Arminianism grows cold, and falls a little from its grace?—that the only possibility of keeping it from falling back into the arms of Socinianism, is a constant blowing of the bellows to keep up its heat, and sublimate away this congenial gravitation? This we honestly believe; and to say it, is infinitely mild, compared with the denunciations of Calvinism, by Arminian pulpits and presses.

But it is time to give place to the milder discussion of the following pages. There the reader will find admirable moderation, combined with clear and energetic defence of truth, as it is in the Bible. We rejoice in the call for a new edition of this little book. It testifies the approbation of the public, in such a manner, as will cheer, we hope, many another minister, to stand in defence of the gospel. A work that originated in a modest determination, to guard the author's flock against the incessant efforts to beguile and proselyte them, has taken its place with the solid litera-

ture of our day, and will descend a benefit and blessing to our children.

We look on the success of this volume, as a happy indication, that morbid sensibility on the subject of religious controversy is passing away; and that the watchmen of Christ will be suffered, henceforth, to lift up their voices against danger, without either the groans of squeamish men, or the growling of "dumb dogs," to hinder their faithfulness. We have long enough listened to the preposterous murmur, that religious controversy deadens piety, and prevents revivals in the Church. Was not the Apostolic age one of life and revival? Look at its sacred literature, full of controversy, and its most renowned revivalist, Paul the Apostle, prince of polemics, who scarcely penned a letter without sharp argumentation in behalf of truth. Was not the great Reformation from Popery, a revival of religion in Europe? Look at its glorious confessions—argument from beginning to end; and all the protracted meetings of the age, were either combats with antichrist, or eager discussions among Protestants themselves. Was not the day of Jonathan Edwards one of Pentecost on these American shores, and his own Northampton, pre-eminently blessed with outpouring of heavenly influence? Look at the Calvinistic battles of his pen, deep in the darkest metaphysics which belong to the controversy, and the most mighty sermon in the conversion of souls, which came from his lips, was

little else than a polemical discourse on the doctrine of election.

Away then with the spurious love that would promote our piety, by refusing to "contend earnestly for the faith." Let us have manly and candid discussion. We shall have genuine love in the end, for truth and peace are everlastingly wedded. If we fail to enjoy the union ourselves, we shall secure it for them who come after us; even as our own superior heritage is the earning of many a long and strenuous conflict, on the part of our fathers.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

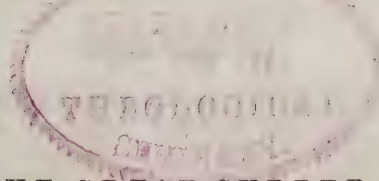
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To prevent misapprehension, some explanation may be needed with respect to the origin and design of the following discourses. They were occasioned by repeated attacks upon the doctrinal system of the Presbyterian Church, apparently made to proselyte its members; and were addressed to audiences of a mixed character, consisting of persons of various religious creeds, and of very different degrees of intelligence. It was therefore the desire of the speaker to adapt his phraseology, arrangement, and mode of illustration, to the most humble capacity.

For the quotations from certain Arminian divines of the seventeenth century, the writer is indebted to a treatise by Dr. John Owen, entitled "A Display of Arminianism."







# THE GREAT SUPPER.

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## DISCOURSE FIRST.

"A certain man made a GREAT SUPPER and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."—LUKE xiv. 16-24.

THIS is one of the most interesting and instructive of all the parables. It was spoken by our Lord with special reference to the Jews, and clearly represented their contemptuous rejection

tion of the gospel, and the calling of the gentiles. But, like the other parables, it affords instruction applicable to every period of the dispensation of mercy. It was addressed to the Jews, but it was "written for our use and learning." It teaches us what God has done and is still doing in pursuance of his gracious designs in regard to our guilty perishing world. In view of the abundant provision he has made for us, through the death of his beloved Son, he sends forth his servants commissioned to cry, "Come, for all things are now ready." All, however, disregard the kind invitation; and it is made manifest that unless some more effectual means are employed to furnish the table with guests, all this rich and costly provision will be thrown away. While, therefore, he directs his servants to use the utmost urgency in their exhortations, he determines to accompany their efforts with the powerful influences of his Spirit; and thus some are made willing to come to the gospel feast. At the same time he resolves to pass by others who were invited but would not come, and declares that they "shall never taste of his supper."

This interesting portion of Scripture contains several important truths which we cannot particularly notice on this occasion. What we intend at present is a plain and familiar exhibition of the leading *Doctrines of Grace*, as maintained by the branch of the Church to which we belong. And the parable is selected as the foundation of our remarks, because

it furnishes a clear and beautiful illustration of these subjects. Of this we shall endeavour to avail ourselves in the ensuing discourses.

I need offer no apology for the exercise of a privilege guarantied by the civil constitution to the humblest individual in the commonwealth,—I mean the privilege of avowing and defending my own religious belief. That freedom of speech which you claim for yourselves as a sacred, inalienable right, you will doubtless cheerfully accord to others. Besides, it is well known that our brethren of other communions are used not only to insist upon their own peculiarities with the greatest zeal, but also to remark with severity upon the views of others. Nay, they are often heard to complain that the ministers of our denomination are either afraid or ashamed to exhibit their distinctive tenets to the world. These good brethren will not therefore take it as unkind, if we make an honest effort to remove the ground of this reproach. At all events, I hope to accomplish the duty upon which I have entered in such a manner as to give no reasonable cause of offence to any sincere child of God, with whatever denomination he may be connected.

I. The first subject for consideration suggested in the parable, is, *the infinite sufficiency of the provision of the gospel*. “A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.” This language clearly im-

plies that the provision in readiness was abundant in proportion to the numbers invited ; and it may teach us the infinite value of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and its ample sufficiency for the whole world. And this is in perfect accordance with the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, which has always, in the most explicit manner, inculcated the sentiment, that no sinner can perish through any deficiency in the atonement. Accordingly, our Confession of Faith, speaking of the non-elect, says, " They never truly come to Christ, and *therefore* cannot be saved."—Chap. 10, sec. 4. The reason why they cannot be saved is, that they will not come to Christ. Nor is it true that this doctrine of the infinite sufficiency of the Redeemer's sufferings is of recent origin in the Presbyterian Church. This is often insinuated by the opponents of our views. The slightest examination might satisfy them, that the doctrine has been maintained by those called Calvinists\* from the earliest period. Calvin

\* The terms *Calvinist* and *Calvinism*, are used in these discourses merely for the sake of brevity, to designate the general outlines of a well known system of doctrine, which, as it was more ably vindicated by Calvin than by any uninspired writer who preceded him, has been called by his name. But it is not intended by this use of terms to countenance the erroneous notion that Calvin originated that system. Much less do we mean to admit, what some appear very anxious should be believed, that *modern* Calvinists are bound to endorse all the opinions and expressions of the illustrious Reformer. With Presbyterians the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith ; and they receive and adopt their published

himself, in his comment on 1 John ii. 2, plainly asserts that "the sufferings of Christ were sufficient for the whole world." And he repeats the same sentiment distinctly in many parts of his writings. In the Synod of Dort, more than two hundred years ago, the whole Calvinistic world united in the declaration, that "The death of the Son of God is a single and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value and price, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world;" and that, "because many who are called by the gospel, do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, this doth not arise from defect or insufficiency of the sacrifice offered by Christ, but from their own fault."—*Art. Syn. Dort*, chap. 2. And yet there are persons who will tell you that the infinite sufficiency of the Saviour's sufferings, is not now, and never was a doctrine of Calvinists. What proof do they adduce in support of their assertion? None at all. Without a particle of evidence, nay, in opposition to all evidence, they have the hardihood to assert that Calvin-

Confession, only because they believe it to be clearly founded upon the Holy Scriptures. Besides these they have no doctrinal standards. And we must regard as extremely futile the argument of those who say, "that because Presbyterians are called Calvinists, therefore they are responsible for all Calvin's peculiar views and modes of expression." As well might it be urged, that because Lutherans are called by the name of Luther, they are obliged to endorse all the opinions of that venerated Reformer, even the absurdity of Consubstantiation.



ists do not believe in the infinite sufficiency and applicability of a Saviour's blood !

What then, you will ask, is the precise point in which we differ from others in regard to the atonement ? Anti-Calvinists usually state it thus : *Whether Christ died for all ?* We, on our part, are not satisfied with this mode of stating the question, since we all admit that Christ did, in some sense, die for all men. And we call upon our opponents to explain in what respect Christ died for all. They sometimes reply that he died for all in that he has *redeemed* all mankind. But from what, we ask, has Christ redeemed all men ? From the power of sin ? Then we ought not to find a single impenitent sinner on earth ! Or has Christ redeemed all men from hell ? Then we cannot imagine how any can be lost. But our Anti-Calvinist brethren further allege, that "Christ died to make it *possible* for all men to be saved." What do they mean by this indefinite, ambiguous language ? Do they mean that he died to make it possible for men to save themselves ? Then we must dissent from their opinion, since the Scriptures uniformly and loudly testify, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God."—Eph. ii. 8. But if our brethren mean that the death of Christ rendered it possible for God to save any of our guilty ruined race, then we cordially unite in the sentiment. It is a glorious truth, that the sufferings of the Saviour rendered it consistent with the justice of God to rescue from perdition any number

of sinners, of whatever character. And it is a truth still more glorious, that the atonement not only rendered salvation in this sense a *possible* thing, but actually secured the salvation of "a multitude which no man can number."

"But," say our Anti-Calvinist brethren, "Christ died for all, in that he died intentionally to save all mankind." And here, after all, is the most important point in the dispute. Did Christ design to save all men by his death? It is admitted on all hands that he intended to save all who should believe on him; but did he intend to save the whole human family? We deny that he did, and appeal to reason and the word of God.

It will be admitted by this respected audience, that all men are not actually saved. Indeed it would be about as easy to prove from the Bible that all will be lost, as that all will be saved. It is admitted then, that some do finally perish in their sins. But,

1. If the Lord Jesus intended to save all men, and all are not saved, then he cannot be said to be *infinitely wise*. No being possessing even a moderate share of wisdom, is willing to undertake a work in which he has not a reasonable prospect of success. Accordingly, a man always exposes himself to the charge of folly who "begins to build, but is not able to finish." To say therefore, that the Lord Jesus undertook a work in which he was unsuccessful, is a direct impeachment of his wisdom.

2. If the Lord Jesus died with the intention to save all mankind, and all are not saved, he

cannot be said to *foreknow* all things. No person in his right mind will embark in an enterprise, especially if it be an expensive one, when he knows beforehand that it will prove unsuccessful. Hence, when men in business have brought ruin upon themselves by rash speculations, they are free to confess that they would have pursued a different plan of operations, could they have foreseen the results. Consequently, to assert that the Lord Jesus undertook that which failed in the issue, is to say that he did not see "the end from the beginning." It is to deny his eternal foreknowledge.

3. If the Lord Jesus intended to save all men, and all are not saved, he cannot be said to possess *almighty power*. The only reason why any being fails to accomplish his designs, is, that he has not the requisite ability. And hence, to affirm that the Redeemer has been unsuccessful in his attempts to save sinners, is to deny the infinite efficacy of his grace. It is to say that he cannot do all things.

4. If the Lord Jesus intended to save men who are not finally saved, there is no good foundation for the *hope of the believer*. The believer's hope is built on the firm assurance that God intends "to save his people from their sins." But if the dearest purposes of Jehovah have been defeated in many thousands and millions of instances, what security has any one that they may not be frustrated in his own case? God may intend to save him, and yet he may not be saved! Thus all the pre-

cious promises of the Bible lose their force and value.

Such are the necessary consequences of the position that Christ died intentionally to save all mankind. It impeaches his wisdom, it denies his foreknowledge, it strips him of his almighty power; in a word, it disrobes him of his divinity, and reduces him to the level of a weak, erring mortal. To crown the whole, it destroys all confidence in the promises of God, and renders the believer's "trust, as the spider's web." Who will censure us for rejecting an opinion which is surrounded with so many formidable difficulties?\*

How cold and comfortless to the believing

\* "To us it is certain," says a celebrated Arminian divine, "that God intends the salvation of many whose salvation he does not accomplish."—*Grevinchov. ad Ames.* fol. 271. "Some will object," say the Remonstrants, "that if so, God hath not attained his end. We answer, This we admit."—*Def. Sentent. in Syn.* fol. 256. In accordance with these views, the "General Conference" teaches that, "To say he [Christ] did not intend to save all sinners, is to represent him as a gross deceiver of the people."—*Meth. Doct. Tracts*, p. 170. And the Rev. Milton Bird, now the oracle of the Cumberland Presbyterians, maintains that, "there is no salvation provided for a part of the human race, and they must inevitably perish; *else God designed the salvation of all.*"—*Un. Evang.* Oct. 6, 1841. p. 7. It must be confessed that this is the only ground on which Anti-Calvinists can possibly sustain themselves: for if they once admit that the Lord Jesus did not intend to save all mankind, or that he intended to save believers only, it follows that he could not have died for all in the same sense, or with the same intention; a consequence which is fatal to their scheme.

soul is this doctrine of a universal atonement without any special or definite design ! How chilling to the best feelings of his heart to be told that Christ is no more *his*—is no more the Saviour of the redeemed than of the lost ! Well may he exclaim, “If this be so, Christ is no Saviour to *me*. He no more ‘gave himself’ for *me* than for the traitor Judas ! For *me* he has not done more than for Sodom and Gomorrah ! The Redeemer is not any more *mine*—is not any thing to me which he was not to the inhabitants of the world of despair ! I am no more indebted to him—have no more right to sing redeeming love, than millions of damned spirits ! Ye have taken away my Lord.”

This doctrine also, has a manifest tendency to encourage the sinner in his impenitent course. “If,” says he, “it is certain that Christ intends to save all men without exception ; if I may take it for granted that he has loved me and given himself for me in the same sense that he has for the most sincere and humble believer ; if he has actually atoned for all my guilt, having made the most ample satisfaction to justice for all the sins of all men, impenitence and unbelief not excepted ; then surely my danger cannot be very great. I shall incur no great risk by continuing longer in sin.” Thus “the heart of the righteous is made sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad ; and the hands of the wicked are strengthened, that he should not return from his wicked way.”—Ezek. xiii. 22. With all due respect,

then, for our Anti-Calvinist brethren, we must dissent from their views of the atonement. At the same time we not only admit, but we earnestly contend, that the sufferings of Christ were amply sufficient for the whole family of Adam.

II. But some will say "What avails this infinite sufficiency of the provision, if men are *unable* to come to the feast? You Calvinists represent men as bound hand and foot, and yet as invited to come to Christ." I shall show in a suitable place that this is by no means a correct representation of our sentiments. At present it will not be amiss to inquire, What is the professed belief of other denominations upon this point? Our Methodist brethren, in their 8th Article of Religion, testify as follows:

"The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

This is anything but Arminianism. It declares 1, That no one can turn to God, or prepare himself for the exercise of faith by his own strength or works; and 2, That we have no power to do good works acceptable to God without a "good will," or right disposition, which it is certain all men do not possess. Indeed, the concluding words, "*when we have*



that good will," imply that some have it not. And yet the article declares that we cannot have that "good will" without "the grace of God preventing us," that is, preceding our own efforts. If therefore, our Methodist brethren will agree to teach in strict accordance with their public creed, we shall not fall out with them, at least on the subject of inability.

The Cumberland Presbyterians, also, in their Confession of Faith, solemnly declare, that "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto without divine aid."—Chap. 9, sec. 3. Here observe that man is said to have lost all ability of will to spiritual good. Nor is there the least room afforded for the idea that this lost ability has been restored to all men by the death of Christ. For the same Confession says, "From this original corruption whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." Chap. 6. sec. 4. All actual transgressions are here represented as flowing from a corruption which still exists, and by which we are now, not only indisposed, but *disabled*, in regard to all good.

And here, you will please to observe, that the question on this subject is not, what man may do with the help of God. With *his* aid

we "can do all things." Nor is it a matter of dispute *how much* ability the sinner may possess. It is granted that if he be truly able to love God, he is *sufficiently* able. Nor, again, is it a subject of query, whether men may receive from the Lord that necessary strength which they do not now possess. It is admitted on all hands, that God "will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." But when our Anti-Calvinist brethren say that an unconverted sinner is able to love God, they mean that he is *now* able. That is the plain import of the terms. If, for example, we should say that all men are able to read correctly, you would not understand us to mean simply that with the aid of competent teachers, they might learn to read; but that they have already acquired the art. So when our brethren tell us that all sinners are sufficiently able to believe, repent and become holy, the obvious meaning of the language is, not merely that sinners may, by receiving grace from God, be enabled to perform those duties, but that they are at this moment able. The question before us then is, *Have all men this ability in actual present possession?*

And now suppose, my hearers, we could submit this question to the great infallible Teacher; what, think you, would he say? We know what he would say, for he once said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 10. Mark the expression, "without me ye can do nothing."

Will any one allege, that none are without Christ? Then he will fly in the face of the Apostle Paul, who writes to the Ephesians, "At that time," (that is before conversion) "ye were without Christ." Eph. ii, 12. The same apostle assures us that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. Does this agree with the notion that all men possess sufficient moral ability? Once more: says the Saviour, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John vi. 44. "Therefore said I unto you, That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." ver. 65. Will it be said that all men are sufficiently drawn by the Father? Then why do we not see all men coming to Christ? For he himself says, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." ver. 45. These declarations we think must decide the question of human ability. And we are sure that they accord with the experience of every sincere, humble child of God. Christians of every denomination, when they approach a throne of grace, express the strongest sense of their own weakness, and of their dependence on God. Indeed, we have often been surprised at the conduct of persons who in conversation would stoutly maintain the sufficiency of their present ability, but who, the moment they bowed on their knees before God, would confess

their inability, saying, "Lord, *enable* us to believe, *enable* us to repent, *enable* us to love and serve thee." What can we make of such persons? They tell one story to man, and another to God. To man they talk of their ability; to God of their inability. Which of these stories are we to believe? Why, undoubtedly, if ever a man will tell the truth, he will tell it to his God.

Still the question recurs, why are sinners exhorted to believe on Christ, to repent of their sins and become holy, if they cannot perform these duties without special grace? Now, though some other denominations, if they adhere to their own creed, are quite as much concerned with this question as we, yet as it is a fair and reasonable one we cheerfully answer,

1. That men are required to believe, repent, and make to themselves a new heart, (Ezek. xviii. 31,) notwithstanding their inability, because they have lost their ability by their own sin. If we are under an obligation to obey God, we cannot free ourselves from that obligation by disabling ourselves; otherwise the indulgence of one sin, would be an excuse for committing another.

2. Sinners are urged to come to Christ, inasmuch as their inability is properly "an inability of will," which can furnish no just ground of excuse for disobedience. The reason why they cannot truly come to the Saviour is, that they are not cordially willing. It is not their choice to come. Their voluntary blindness,

their love of sin and aversion to holiness, are what disable them. We do not therefore teach that "sinners are bound hand and foot," and thus prevented from coming to Christ, though desirous to do so. This is a palpable misrepresentation of our sentiments. They would be able if they were *truly willing*. Yet the Scriptures represent the state of their hearts as presenting an obstacle to their conversion, which can be overcome only by the power of divine grace. Still, it does not affect their accountability. Their case is like that of a rebellious child, who loves his sin so well that he cannot truly repent of it; or like that of a wicked man, who cannot love his mortal enemy, owing to the intensity of his hatred. In neither of these cases is the obligation in any wise diminished. The rebellious child still ought to repent. The wicked man is still bound to love his enemy. If it were otherwise; if an inability of the will could release from obligation, then wickedness would be its own excuse. Then the greater the sinner, the less would be his guilt, and devils and damned spirits would be no longer bound to love and obey God.

3. Sinners are invited by the Saviour to come to him, in order that feeling their own inability, they may be constrained to look to God as their all-sufficient helper. Why does a parent extend his arms to his infant child and say, "Come to me?" It is to awaken in the child a desire to come, and also that the child may reach forth its hands and implore

the parent's assistance. So Christ invites us to come to him, to excite in us suitable desires after himself, and in order that, discovering our own weakness, we may cry to him for help.

4. Sinners are commanded to believe on Christ, because the very command implies that the grace of God will not be wanting to him who sincerely desires and attempts to perform his duty. Why did the Saviour command the helpless paralytic to take up his bed and walk? Doubtless, if some modern opponents of Calvinism had been present, they would have charged our Lord with inconsistency in directing a man to walk, who had not been able to leave his bed for years. But the Saviour said, "Rise." And at once, looking to Christ for his almighty aid, he "arose, took up his bed, and walked."

From what has been said, it may be seen that this subject is one of immense practical importance. For if the sinner be persuaded that he has not lost his "ability of will," or that his lost ability has been restored by *native grace*, it will be utterly impossible to bring him to a sense of his true condition, or to prevail on him to seek help from the Lord. For he will feel that if he already possesses sufficient ability, it is absurd to ask for more. Buoyed up with the vain confidence that he can turn to the Lord at any time, he of course will postpone the work to the latest possible period. In the meanwhile, he is proof against the warnings and invitations of the gospel. It



is not till a man is thoroughly convinced of his insufficiency and helplessness, that he will begin to cry in good earnest, "Lord, save, or I perish."

III. I shall now proceed to the most interesting part of the parable. The King having provided a most plentiful entertainment, sent out his servant "to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." All, however, "with one consent began to make excuse," and under various pretences declined the generous offer. "The master of the house being angry," and not willing that all this costly preparation should be thrown away, directed his servant to go out into the lanes and streets, the highways and hedges, and "compel them to come in that his house might be filled." He moreover declared, that those others, who were bidden and would not come, should never taste of his supper.

This whole passage affords a beautiful illustration of the *Election of Grace*, as maintained by modern Calvinists. Thus, from eternity all things were present to the eye of God. To him the fall of man was distinctly visible, even before the race was called into existence, and moved by infinite mercy, he resolved to provide a remedy. Intending to rescue a portion of the race from perdition, he would send his only begotten Son to prepare a great salvation. Through the death of Christ, he determined that an unlimited offer of mercy should be made to the human family. All should be invited to partake of the rich repast.

But he well knew that this generous offer would be universally rejected, and that unless some special means should be employed to bring sinners to the Saviour, all would continue in sin and perish; and thus Christ would die in vain.

To prevent so unhappy a result, God determined to send forth his Spirit with his special, divine influences, and thus many should be powerfully constrained to accede to the terms of salvation. In other words, he *chose* or *elected* them to eternal life, and appointed all the means necessary to carry into effect his merciful design. As to the rest who should be invited, but would refuse the rich provision, he resolved to pass them by, and exclude them forever from his mercy.

These glorious purposes, formed in eternity, God is now every where carrying into effect. At his command his servants go forth, and invite all, "as many as they find," to come and accept the salvation provided. Yet none are found to hearken to the gracious overtures, till by the special influences of the Spirit of grace they are brought to bow to his peaceful sceptre.\*

\* The writer does not mean to intimate that certain divine purposes succeed others in the order of time; though one may be viewed as subsequent to another in the order of nature. For example, God's determination to provide a Saviour was a consequence of his purpose to redeem a portion of the human family. In accordance with the Confession of Faith and the great body of Predestinarian divines, it is assumed in these discourses that God, in his purpose of election, viewed man not

Such is the doctrine of gratuitous Election, as received by the Church to which we belong. It is true, our representation of it may differ widely from that made by certain zealous Anti-Calvinists. Sectarian partisans are interested in misleading the public in regard to our real sentiments, and hence their assertions should be received with caution. Those who would understand our system of doctrine, must listen, not to the misrepresentations of its enemies, but to the explanations of its friends. From the view which has been presented you may clearly see,

1. That the doctrine of gratuitous Election *harmonizes with the free, unrestricted offer of salvation*. And yet there are some who strangely imagine, that Calvinists are guilty of a departure from their own principles when they invite all to the gospel feast. But there is no inconsistency here. The Master of the feast in the parable, first directed his servant to invite all, "as many as he should find." Was this at all inconsistent

only as created, but as fallen, guilty, and condemned. And following out the illustration furnished in the parable, the decree of election is here made to respect man not only as guilty and condemned, but as obstinately disinclined to accept the terms of pardon and reconciliation. Ordinarily, at least, the purpose of election is carried into effect in time, after an indiscriminate offer of salvation. It is taken for granted that God's eternal designs correspond perfectly with what he now does; and that he intended a general offer to precede the interposition of special grace, and the selection of the vessels of mercy.

with a determination afterwards carried out, to constrain a part to come, and leave the rest to the consequences of their unwise choice? Neither is God chargeable with inconsistency, when he directs that all should first be invited to the Saviour; and when they all refuse, executes other determinations respecting them. We invite all to the feast of the gospel, because our divine Master has commanded us so to do. We invite them to come, because the provision in readiness is sufficient for all, and if they will come, they shall “in no wise be cast out.” We invite all, because it is their duty to come, and they have no valid excuse for staying away. We urge them to come, because we hope that while we are speaking, the Lord may send down the special influences of his grace, and constrain them to yield their hearts to the Saviour.

2. We see, also, that it is not implied in the election of grace, *that if a man be elected to salvation he will be saved, let him do what he may*. This is often asserted by the enemies of the doctrine. But it is not true. Because the Master of the house determined that some should partake of his rich repast, and to that end should be effectually constrained to come, did it follow that they would partake whether they came or not? If they had stayed away could they at all have tasted his bounty? So if God has mercifully determined that some shall believe on Christ and become holy in order to their final salvation, does it follow that they will be saved whether

they are true believers or not? Away with such absurdity! God never determines the end without also determining the means of its accomplishment.

3. We may see also that *the Presbyterian Church does not carry the doctrine of election further than some other denominations do*. Our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in their Articles of Religion, publicly declare their sentiments in the following terms: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." Such is the creed of our Episcopal brethren; and it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to express the doctrine of personal, gratuitous election, in stronger or more unequivocal language.

Our brethren of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church also, in their Confession of Faith,

chap. 8, sec. 1, publicly declare their solemn belief, in the following words: "It has pleased God to choose the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, to be the Mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest and king; the head and Saviour of his Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he promised a seed, to be by him in time redeemed, called by his word and spirit, justified by his grace, sanctified and glorified." This is strong language. It is true, the words *elect* and *predestinate* do not occur, but the passage contains the very sum and substance of the old Calvinistic doctrine of election. It tells us that Jesus Christ was foreordained to be a Mediator, before there were any human beings in whose behalf he could mediate. It also tells us that the Father promised the Son a seed to be redeemed and saved, before there were any sinners to be redeemed and saved. Who is this "seed?" Certainly not all mankind. Surely our brethren do not mean to affirm that all mankind are to be, by Christ, in time redeemed, called, sanctified and glorified. By the "seed" is meant only a part of the human family. Here, then, is a certain part of mankind who, according to our brethren, were given to Christ, in eternity; and whose future conversion and salvation are as sure as they can be made by a solemn promise of the Father to the Son, uttered before the foundations of the earth were laid. What is this but the



good old doctrine of gratuitous Election? The same brethren, also, in their Catechism, answer to question 7, tell us that "God, according to the counsel of his own will, hath foreordained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory." Now if ever the glory of God is displayed in its brightest colours, it is when a sinner is turned to God by faith and repentance. Every such event swells a new tide of joy and praise over the heavenly world. It follows, that wherever and whenever such an event occurs, according to our brethren, God must have "foreordained to bring it to pass." And this, say they, the Lord did, not on account of foreseen goodness, but "according to the counsel of his own will." What is this but special, eternal Election?

That distinguished man, the Rev. John Wesley, in the year 1743, when in the fortieth year of his age, and in the full maturity of his judgment, wrote as follows; "With regard to the first, unconditional election, I believe that God \* \* has unconditionally elected some persons to many peculiar advantages, both with regard to temporal and spiritual things; and I do not deny (though I cannot prove it is so) that he has unconditionally elected some persons to eternal glory."—*Works*, Vol. III, page 289. Would Mr. Wesley have said this, if he had regarded election as that horrible thing some represent it to be?

4. We may further learn, from the view

which has been presented, that it is no part of the doctrine of election, as maintained by its friends, *that the non-elect cannot be saved, let them do what they may.* If all that were bidden to the feast had accepted the invitation, instead of turning away, one to his farm and another to his merchandize, they might all have enjoyed the rich repast. And so, if the non-elect would come to Christ, he would “in no wise cast them out.” What hinders their coming? Nothing in the universe but their own voluntary, cherished sinfulness. If, sensible of their own weakness, they would seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, and make the effort in humble dependence upon divine grace, they would be enabled to come. But since they *choose* to stay away, they cannot throw the blame of their perdition upon God, and say, let them do what they will, they must be lost. Of what can they complain? That they were not invited to the feast? No. That the provision was not sufficient? No. Did they come and were refused admittance? No. Did they earnestly desire to come, but were prevented? No. Of what then can they complain, unless of this,—that they were not constrained to do what they were not willing to do. And will any one complain of that? No: be assured their mouths will be stopped, and they will forever feel that they are their own destroyers. There is no mysterious agency, no fatal necessity, no secret decree of God, which drags the sinner down to perdition. I am aware that insinuations to that effect are often thrown out

against the doctrines of our church; but I solemnly assure you that they are all utterly groundless. Our Confession of Faith, in accordance with the language of the Bible, says of the non-elect that "It pleased God... to pass them by, and ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin." Ch. 3, sec. 7. And the Larger Catechism, in the answer to Question 68, tells us that, "for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in unbelief, they do never truly come to Christ." And the Confession, in chap. 10, sec. 4, says, "they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." What is the plain meaning of all this language? What but this, that if any are not saved, it is because they do not truly come to Christ. Again: they do not come to Christ, because they are justly left in unbelief; and they are left in unbelief, and finally punished for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them.

And here it will not be out of place to notice the sentiments of other denominations on this point. In the volume of "Doctrinal Tracts," published by authority of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on page 139, we are informed that "God predestinates, or fore-appoints all disobedient unbelievers to damnation, not without, but according to his fore-knowledge of all their works from the foundation of the world." And again on the following page, "God refused or reprobated all disobedient unbelievers as such

to damnation." This is certainly very strong language. It represents God as predestinating a certain part of mankind to damnation thousands of years before they were born; and I am sure no modern Calvinist would express himself on the subject in harsher terms.

Our Cumberland brethren, also, in their Confession, ch. 5, sec. 4, publicly avow their belief as follows :

"As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God uses for softening others." Here, is what some call *reprobation* carried out to the fullest extent, contended for by modern Calvinists. The same brethren also, in the passage above cited from their Catechism, assure us that "God, according to the counsel of his own will, hath fore-ordained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory." Qu. 7. This is very plain; but the question arises, what is for God's glory? This is answered in their Confession, chap. 33, sec. 2, where they tell us that God hath appointed a day of judgment, among other reasons, "for the manifestation of the glory of his justice *in the*

*damnation of the reprobate.*" The obvious inference from these two passages taken together is, that the damnation of the reprobate being for God's glory, God hath *fore-ordained to bring their damnation to pass!* And this, say these brethren, he did "according to the counsel of his own will." We shall not quarrel about a word; but we prefer the more mild and scriptural language of our own Confession, which says of the non-elect, that they were "ordained to dishonour and wrath, *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice."

Having endeavoured to explain the doctrine of Election, and free it from the misrepresentations of its opponents, I shall now offer a few arguments in support of its truth.

1. *The prayers which are offered for the conversion of sinners are all based upon the truth of this doctrine.* Christians generally agree that it is proper to pray for impenitent sinners; and that such prayers are not offered in vain. Those who hold Calvinistic views think they have a peculiar encouragement to pray for the conversion of their fellow-men, since they believe that the means and the end, prayer and its answer are fore-ordained in connexion with each other. The Presbyterian Confession teaches that by the eternal decree of God, "the liberty or contingency of second causes is not taken away, but rather established." ch. 3. sec. 1. If this be true, the earnest, fervent "prayer of the righteous man availeth much." But even the bitter opponents of a Calvinistic creed do, as is well

known, pray for the conversion of sinners. But what do they mean by such prayers? What, on their principles, can they expect or desire God to do for the sinner? They profess to believe that God has done enough for the present toward his conversion, that no *special* grace is needed for that purpose, and that the question of every man's salvation is left to his own self-determining will, which is to "act without being acted on." Why then ask the Lord to interfere any further in the matter? Why ask him to bestow an increased amount of grace? Ah, it appears that our brethren after all, are not quite willing to trust the sinner's conversion to the self-determination of his own heart. They wish the Lord to decide the question himself. They desire him to interpose by the *special* influence of his Spirit, and do for the sinner far more than he has ever yet done. They expect him to *constrain* the sinner by his all-conquering grace. In a word, they desire the Lord to do exactly what Calvinists believe he always determined to do in answer to prayer, viz: to *select* sinners from the common mass, and make them the objects of his distinguishing mercy. Now if the Lord grant their petitions, it must be that he does so from design. And if ever he designed to convert sinners in answer to prayer he must always have designed it; for nothing is plainer than that *what God now does, he always meant to do*. Moreover, in answering these prayers, it cannot be that the Lord is influenced by any thing done by the



sinners themselves, who are perhaps careless and impenitent at the very time the prayer is presented in their behalf. In doing what He does for them, therefore, he must be prompted solely by his own spontaneous mercy. And thus we see that the doctrine of gratuitous Election, in all its length and breadth, is plainly implied in the prayers offered by Anti-Calvinists themselves; and our brethren should not find fault with us for preaching it, so long as they "pray it out" in all their supplications at a throne of grace.

2. The truth of this doctrine is also strongly attested by *the experience of all true Christians*. If we request pious persons of whatever denomination to relate how they were first brought to the Saviour, they will all give us substantially the same account of the matter. One will say, "I once led a very careless life, and though often affectionately urged to come to the gospel feast, I refused, and, like many others, sought to 'make excuse.' At last I was led to hear a sermon, which I shall never forget while I live. The Lord sent it home with power to my heart, and would not let me find peace until I found it in believing. Thus, if the Lord in mercy had not constrained me, I should never have come to Christ, and to him be all the praise." Another will say, "I was living without God and without hope, my heart being set supremely on the world. And such I would have remained to this day, but for the interposition of sovereign grace. God

called to me by the voice of affliction, and though at first I heeded him not, he still followed me with one affliction after another, and would not let me go till I was compelled to surrender my whole heart to him." A third will say, "There is nothing very remarkable in the history of my conversion. I was one day reflecting how I had neglected my soul, and I secretly resolved that I would begin to seek salvation in the use of God's appointed means. The more I read, and heard, and prayed, the more I became impressed with my sinfulness and danger, until through mercy, I was enabled to cast myself entirely upon Him, who is the helpless sinner's friend. And though my first movement toward the Lord might have appeared to come from the suggestions of my own heart, I am now convinced that my first resolutions on the subject, as well as the feelings which dictated them, were the fruits of the Spirit's operation. To him therefore, be all the glory." \*

\* Rigid Arminians, as already hinted, maintain that God having conferred grace upon all men, leaves all to act from their own self-originated choice. If any in the exercise of this common or *native grace* make a movement toward the Lord, then will he bestow the blessings of pardon and salvation. Thus, in what pertains to conversion, man makes the first effectual movement. The Calvinist, on the contrary, holds that after all that may have been done for impenitent sinners, they will obstinately persist in sin, and refuse even to seek salvation till the heart is touched with the special grace of God, who begins as well as carries on the work. With these remarks I would introduce to the reader's attention

Thus, the testimony of religious experience is in favour of the doctrine of Election; and sincere and humble Christians of every denomination can unite with the sacred poet in singing :

“ ’Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste  
And perished in our sin.”

3. In support of this doctrine we appeal to *the inspired word of God*. As Protestants,

a passage from “Anecdotes on the Shorter Catechism.” p. 48.

“A talking lady who honestly avowed Arminian sentiments, was one evening engaged in a dispute with a gentleman of the opposite opinion; and argued so long and so violently in defence of the creature’s being *first* in the matter of conversion to God, that to her surprise she perceived it was one o’clock in the morning. She started and said, ‘Well, I had not thought it was so late; I see I cannot work upon *you*, and I am sure all you say will not convince *me*; so good night.’ ‘Yes,’ said the gentleman, ‘it is time to go to rest. Madam, I wish you a good night. I suppose, however, that when you retire, you think to spend a few minutes between you and God?’ ‘Doubtless, sir, I do.’ ‘Please then, madam, to tell God what you have just told me.’ ‘What is that, sir?’ ‘Why, Madam, that you began with him before he began with you.’ ‘No, I will not,’ said she. ‘I knew you would not,’ replied the gentleman, ‘and therefore I reserved this argument for the last; for I never found any person of your opinion that could address God in consistency, with the language which you hold out so confidently to your fellow-mortals.’ She was evidently hurt by this simple confutation; went away without answering a word, and never spoke to him afterwards.”

you profess to receive this holy book, as the infallible rule of your faith. Here, then, is a standard to which we must all bow. From this oracle there is no appeal. Let us then go to the Bible, not to alter, or amend, or explain away, but with a fixed determination to admit every thing in its plain and obvious meaning; and to make our own opinions bend to the authority of eternal truth.

Let us now turn to the 1st chapter to the Ephesians. In the 4th verse we are taught that God from eternity *chose*, or *elected* some of mankind to a state of holiness. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” And then to give greater emphasis to the sentiment, the Apostle adds in the next verses: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Now I admit that ingenuity may explain away any Scripture passage; but the question with us should be, What did the inspired writer mean by these words? Certainly if he did not mean to teach gratuitous Election, it is perfectly amazing that he should use such language. The opponents of that doctrine say that men are not elected to salvation till they believe; but the Apostle says, “chosen—before the foundation of the world.” They also allege, that men are elected on account

of their holiness; the Apostle says they were chosen "*that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love.*" They further contend, that election depends on the will of man; but Paul makes it depend on the will of God; "according to the good pleasure of his will." In the 9th and following verses of the chapter, the Apostle pursues the same subject: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will; according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ"—"In whom also we have an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." What can this mean, if it does not teach gratuitous predestination?

Some have contended that the Apostle is here teaching an election of *all men*. You have only to try this interpretation of his words, to convince you that it leads to downright Universalism. "Having predestinated [all men] unto the adoption of children!" "He hath made [all men] accepted in the beloved!" "In whom [all men] have an inheritance, being predestinated," &c.

Of Paul's notable sermon at Antioch the Holy Ghost testifies, "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Acts xiii. 48. We know it has been said that this passage should be translated, "As many as were *disposed*, or *inclined* to eternal life, believed."

But we also know that the word here rendered *ordained*, is the same that is so rendered in Rom. xiii. 1. “The powers that be are *ordained* of God.” And in Acts xxii. 10, it is translated *appointed*: “It shall be told thee of all things which are *appointed* for thee to do.” And the most literal version of the passage therefore is, “As many as were *ordained* or *appointed* to eternal life, believed.”

In the 1st Epistle of Peter, 1st chapter and 2d verse, we read thus: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.” You will not fail to notice that the persons here spoken of were elected, not *because* of their obedience, but *unto* obedience. And they were chosen, not *on account of* their sanctification, but “*through* sanctification of the Spirit,” as the means of accomplishing God’s gracious purpose. They were also elected “according to his foreknowledge,” not of their superior goodness, but of their guilty, ruined, and helpless condition. For another Apostle denies that election is founded upon foreseen acts of the creature: “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” 2 Tim. i. 9.\*

\* Some Anti-Calvinists insist that election, as taught in the Scriptures, means nothing more than this: that God, foreseeing from eternity that some would come to Christ at any rate, chose or predestinated such to salva-



In 2 Thess. ii. 13, we read as follows: "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel." Here observe, that God had from the beginning, or from eternity chosen the Thessalonian converts to salvation;—not indeed to a salvation without faith and holiness; but to a salvation to be effected, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Also in pursuance of his merciful design, God had "called them by the gospel." For this gracious election, the Apostle tells them they were "bound to give thanks to God." But if, as Anti-Calvinists contend, they were chosen on account of something

tion. But if this is all, we cannot see the least use or advantage in election. For if God foreknew that some would come to Christ without any special interference on his part, he must have known that all such would be saved as a matter of course; and election could add nothing to their security. It would be a mere nullity. On this plan election would amount to just this: that God determined from eternity to save those who should save themselves! It would be as though the Master of the house had simply resolved to compel those to come in, who he foresaw would come and partake at any rate!! Others allege that God from eternity chose or elected *characters* and not persons. This reminds us of the argument of the celebrated Universalist Ballou, who contended that the characters, not the persons of the wicked, would be sent to hell. If only the characters of men are predestinated to eternal life, what, I humbly ask, becomes of their persons?

good foreseen in themselves, then certainly they ought not to thank God, but themselves. I say if they were elected on account of their foreseen faith and works, the praise of their election was due, not to God, but to themselves. In that case we cannot see why they should thank God for their election.

In the 11th chapter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul having noticed the interesting fact that during the awful apostasy which occurred in the time of Ahab, God “*had reserved to himself* seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal,” adds immediately, “Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to *the election of grace*. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Vs. 4—7. This passage decides that election is *gratuitous*, or, altogether “of grace,” and not founded upon any thing done by the creature. At the same time it teaches the alarming truth, that some are left to the blinding influence of their own wilful depravity.

There are various passages which teach the election of grace, by necessary implication; as Acts xv. 14, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out of them* a people for his name.” 1 Thess. v. 9, “God hath not *appointed us* to wrath, but to obtain sal-

vation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Rev. xvii. 8, "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."

The same doctrine is found in that noble challenge of Paul, near the close of the 8th chapter to the Romans. The Apostle knew that all things should work together for good to them that love God. But how did he know it? Under the guidance of inspiration, he looked above the shifting scenes of time to the steady counsels of eternity. "And we know," says he, "that all things work together for good, to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Vs. 28—33. Here again we must say, it is beyond measure astonishing that the Apostle should use this language, if he held the opinions of modern Anti-Calvinists. It is language the very opposite of that which they use in all their discourses. *They* tell us that if any were predestinated to life, it was on account of a foreseen conformity to Christ: but Paul says, "Predestinated *to be* conformed to the

image of Christ. Anti-Calvinists say that none are elected to salvation till they are called; but the Apostle makes the calling to follow as a consequence of predestination: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called;" and again, "called according to his purpose." True, it is said, "Whom he did *foreknow*, he also did predestinate." In other words, whom he knew with affection as his future children, in accordance with what Christ says; "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." For it is certain that God could not have foreseen in human beings any spiritual good not implanted in them by his grace. The above passage, then, is a clear and explicit declaration of gratuitous Election; and if there were no other in the Bible in which it were taught, we might confidently assert that this doctrine and the authority of inspiration, must stand or fall together.

We shall resume the proof of this doctrine in a future discourse. In the mean time, let me request you to ponder seriously the consequences of a denial of it. According to Anti-Calvinists, there was no purpose of God rendering it certain that any human being should believe and be saved; all was left to chance, or the self-determination of man's depraved will! And thus, the Lord might be without a people for his name's glory, and Jesus Christ might suffer and die in vain? All the glorious designs of mercy being left dependent on the wills of creatures, might be completely frustrated. We must therefore

regard the scheme of our Anti-Calvinist brethren as a most *unmerciful* scheme. It is cruel to the Saviour, to whom it refuses the least security arising from any purpose of God, that he should ever "see of the travail of his soul." It is most unmerciful in its aspect to the human family, to whom it holds out a mere *possible* salvation, and destroys the certainty that any will be actually saved.\* It abandons the everlasting destinies of our race, as it were, upon a dangerous ocean, without compass or rudder, to be the sport of ever changing winds and waves. Well does the great Luther say, in his preface to the Epistle to the Romans: "And assuredly this firm sentence and invincible certainty of predestination is most necessary. For so weak are we, that were it placed in our hands, very few or none would be saved; for the devil would overcome all. But now since this firm and most certain sentence of God cannot be changed or reversed by any creature, there is left us an assured hope of conquering sin at length, however much it now rage in the flesh." *Works*, vol. v. p. 100.

\* "No such will," says Arminius, "can be ascribed to God, by which he so willeth any man to be saved, as that his salvation shall therefore be certain and infallible." *Antiperk.* fol. 583. "The death and satisfaction of Christ having taken place," says another, "it might happen that no one fulfilling the condition of the new covenant, none would be saved." *Grevinchov. ad Ames.* fol. 9. These early defenders of Arminianism come out boldly and fearlessly with the consequences of their doctrine.

We shall now notice a few of the common objections against this doctrine.

1. It is alleged that it represents God as *unjust*.

We answer: if there be injustice towards any, it must be that they are treated worse than they deserve. But of whom can this be affirmed? Not of the elect, for they are dealt with infinitely better than their deserts. Not of the non-elect, for they are only punished in the degree which their "wilful neglect and contempt," added to all their other sins, have merited. Where then, I ask, is the injustice complained of?

Suppose the Master of the house had resolved to leave all in their refusal of his generous offer, never to taste of his supper; would this have been to treat them worse than they deserved? And what if God had left us all to perish in the rejection of his mercy, without choosing any to life? Nay, what if he had passed by our guilty, rebellious race, as he did the fallen angels? What if, instead of providing a Saviour, he had doomed us all to eternal wo, would not his throne have remained for ever pure? \* Why, then, charge

\* The Methodist General Conference, in their volume of Doctrinal Tracts, say, they "reject it as a bold, precarious assertion," that "God might justly have passed by all men." page 25. Of course if God could not justly have withheld a Saviour, then salvation is not of grace, but the whole scheme of redemption is a debt due to justice, for which we are not bound to render thanks.



him with injustice, because he mercifully determined to rescue a part from that perdition which all had merited?

“But,” says one, “unless God constrain all men to come to the feast, he ought not to constrain any.” I answer, “Should it be according to thy mind?” Must the Master of the house allow all his expensive provision to be thrown away? Or, to drop the illustration, must Jesus Christ shed his blood in vain? Must God withhold his triumphant grace, and cease to draw sinners to the Saviour, because you are not pleased with his method of salvation?

2. It is contended that the doctrine of Election represents God as *partial*.

We answer: partiality is a capricious, and unreasonable preference of one before another. If then it could be proved that God can have no good reasons for choosing some to salvation and leaving others to perish in their sins, he would be chargeable with undue partiality. But this cannot be shown. He may have an hundred good reasons where we may not be able to discover one. That God is *discriminating* in his goodness;—that he bestows more upon some than he does upon others, is too manifest to be denied. The evidence meets us wherever we turn our eyes. Let me ask the objector, Why has God seen fit to pass by the rebel angels and provide a Saviour for the human race? Why has he passed by the heathen tribes and sent his gospel to our shores? Why is one person brought up in a pious

family, and another left to the corrupting influence of profligate parents? Why is one born to disease and pain, and another to vigorous health? Why is one taken to heaven in infancy, and another spared to old age, to die under a load of guilt? If the objector cannot answer these questions, it ill becomes him to charge God as capricious, or unreasonable, because he converts one sinner and leaves another unconverted?

The Master of the house did more for those who came to the feast, than for those who stayed away; they were, by his order, "compelled to come in." And it is admitted that God does more for the elect than for the non-elect; he makes them "willing in the day of his power." In all this he is neither arbitrary nor capricious, but has the best possible reasons for his conduct. He does nothing merely because he *will* do it, but because it is best. It is because his eye and heart are fixed upon the best possible results that he is a God of electing love.

But why object to the idea of distinguishing mercy? It is involved in every prayer offered for impenitent sinners. Our Anti-Calvinist friends themselves find it impossible to pray for the conversion of their fellow-men, without asking God to do more for some than he has done for others. If they ask the Lord to convert the souls of the sinners in a particular congregation, what is this but asking him to do for those sinners what he has not done, and what they hardly expect he will do for all

others? And if He should answer the prayer, that would be the very thing they denounce as partiality! But if they pray for the salvation of all men living, then they ask the Lord to do for the present generation what he has not done for past generations, all of whom have not been converted and saved. And this, according to our good brethren, would be partiality on the grandest scale! We think, therefore, that they ought either to cease praying for the conversion of sinners, or retract this charge of partiality against the election of grace.\*

3. It is objected that this doctrine makes God a "respector of persons."

There would be much force in this objection, if it could be shown that in the election of grace, God is influenced by respect to birth or fortune, talents or education, or any other worldly distinction. But this is what the doctrine expressly disavows. The Master of the house did not manifest any such respect of persons, for he brought to his feast "the maimed, the halt, and the blind." God does not respect the persons of the wise, the mighty or the noble; for "not many" of them are called; but he "hath chosen the weak." 1 Cor. i. 27 He does not prefer the rich above the poor; on the contrary "he hath chosen the

\* An intelligent Anti-Calvinist, now a preacher, once assured the writer that he did not, and would not pray for the conversion of sinners; because he was convinced that all such prayers involved the idea of "Calvinistic partiality."

poor of this world" to be heirs of the kingdom. James ii. 5. He has no partiality for the Jew above the Gentile, but "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." Every such individual is a subject of the election of grace which takes men indiscriminately out of different nations.

When the Bible denies that God is a respecter of persons, it always has reference to Him as the moral Governor of the world; and simply affirms that when he sits upon the throne of judgment, he will treat men uniformly according to their real character. But it does not deny the discriminating influence of the Holy Spirit in forming that character. Though God has none of the unjust partialities of the wicked judge, he may doubtless "do what he will with his own," and bestow the free gift of his grace "according to the good pleasure of his will."

4. It is alleged that if election be true, *we should not pray for all men.*

But what is there in election to hinder the success of prayer for any man living? You will say, If all men living should be saved, election would be proved to be untrue. But no, it would not. Election does not require that some of each generation should be lost. If all the present inhabitants of the earth should be brought to the Saviour, they would all be found to have been included in God's original purpose of mercy. On the other hand, if they should all be lost, God would not fail to have "made up his jewels," out of other generations,

and still his "purpose according to election would stand." We are encouraged to pray for all men living, because the salvation of every one is possible with God ; and because by his unchangeable decree he has firmly established a connexion between the means and the end, so that the more diligently means are employed, the more persons, with the divine blessing, will be converted and saved.

Let me now respectfully ask, with what show of consistency can our Anti-Calvinist brethren pray for the salvation of all men ? If, as they say, there are sinners who may and often do effectually resist the utmost efforts of almighty grace, what can prayer avail in their behalf ? Moreover, our Methodist friends, as we have seen, teach the doctrine that God from the foundation of the world "refused or reprobated" a certain part of mankind to damnation ; and the Cumberland brethren tell us that the Father from eternity promised the Son "a seed" to be redeemed and saved, and at the same period fore-ordained to bring to pass "the damnation of the reprobate," as an event "for his own glory." How then, can these good brethren pray for all men ? On what grounds can they hope for the final salvation of those who were "reprobated to damnation" before they were born ? Besides : on the supposition that they believe the doctrine of the divine fore-knowledge, how can they pray for the salvation of those whose damnation was known to God, and therefore certain, from all eternity ? Once more, if as they con-

tend, the Lord Jesus prayed in vain for the salvation of all men, how can they expect their prayers to be more successful than his? Have they more influence with the Father than his beloved Son? Nay, if as they allege, God has already bestowed grace enough upon all men to make their salvation possible to themselves, where is the necessity of praying for any man? If the conversion of sinners is left to the self-determination of their own wills, why ask God to interfere any more in the matter? The Calvinistic system easily obviates all these difficulties, through the grand principle that fore-ordination binds together the means and the end. But surely our brethren would not be quite so forward with their objections against the systems of others, if they were aware of the formidable difficulties connected with their own.

5. It is objected, that Election involves the doctrine of "infant damnation."

On the contrary it furnishes the only ground on which the salvation of infants can be consistently maintained, for if those who die in infancy are chosen to eternal life, then we have the strongest possible assurance of their final happiness. On the other hand if, as some Anti-Calvinists argue, infants are not elect to salvation, they cannot be of that happy number which Christ will finally gather to his heavenly kingdom. Matt. xxiv. 31. These brethren, however, in their lively concern for our *orthodoxy*, complain of a passage in our Confession, ch. 10, sec. 3, which says, "Elect



infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit." From this they argue "that if some who die in infancy are elect, others who die in infancy are reprobate." But this is a gross error founded upon a misapprehension of the scriptural application of the term "elect." This term, when used with reference to salvation, does not signify chosen out of a particular *age* or *class*, but out of the general mass of mankind. Thus, when John, addressing the "elect lady," speaks of her "*elect sister*," (2 John v. 13) we are not to conclude with our good brethren, that she must have had also a *reprobate* sister, but that the sister was one of those who were elect out of the fallen family of Adam. Also, when the phrase "elect children of God" occurs in sermons or writings, we do not understand it as implying that there are also *reprobate* children of God. Accordingly, our Confession of Faith uniformly uses the word "elect" in its true scriptural sense, to signify chosen out of the whole race of fallen men. When it speaks of infants dying in infancy as *elect*, its obvious meaning is, that they are elected out of the whole mass of human beings; and this is perfectly consistent with the opinion that all who die in infancy are chosen to salvation.

Let us now inquire whether the public standards of other denominations are more *orthodox* on this point than ours. The Methodist Discipline, under the head of "ministration of baptism to infants," directs the minister to pray that the infant to be baptized, "may ever re-

main in the number of thy faithful and elect children." ch. 3, sec. 2. Of course if the infant be in the number of the elect, it must itself be elect—an *elect infant*. Here then is the doctrine of "infant election" in all its length and breadth. I will add, what is not perhaps generally known to the world, that the great founder of Methodism in his treatise on Infant Baptism, published by the General Conference, boldly avows the sentiment that infants cannot ordinarily be saved without baptism. "If" says he "infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has already been proved" he adds "that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to eternal damnation." *Doct. Tracts*, p. 251. Still further on, in summing up his argument, Mr. Wesley urges that "outward baptism is generally, in an ordinary way, necessary to salvation," and that "infants may be saved, as well as adults." He adds "nor ought we to neglect any means of saving them." p. 259. From this reasoning the inference is unavoidable that infants dying without baptism, *ordinarily* at least, suffer eternal damnation. The very thought of this is enough to make any one shudder! But it is not so much my object to convict our Methodist brethren of holding "infant damnation," as to show with what an ill grace charges of

that kind are preferred against others, by members of their communion.

Our Cumberland brethren in their Confession of Faith, chap, 10, sec. 3, admit the salvation of infants; and yet in section 1, of the same chapter, limit the blessings of eternal life to "those whom God calls, and who obey the call, and *those only*;" from which number infants are necessarily excluded.\* Nor do they recognise the election of infants; but on the contrary affirm that none are elect "in a saving sense," but those who are "enlightened in the knowledge of God," and have "spiritual wisdom to discern and detect deceivers." *Conf. Faith, ch. 3, Note.* May I not suggest, that as their own public standards leave this subject so much in the dark, they should be somewhat cautious in charging others with excluding infants from the blessedness of heaven.

Let me now ask the opponents of infant election, what they will do with those who die in infancy, if they are not the "elect of God?" Will they people the realms of glory with the *reprobate*? Will they have it that the Lord Jesus will gather the *non-elect* to his heavenly kingdom? Ah, this doctrine of infant election is a serious annoyance to our brethren. They can neither deny nor admit its truth,

\* Old Arminian divines, as Episcopius, Curcellæus, and others, contended that infants in a future world, though saved from the pains of hell, would always remain in an infantine state, and thus be incapable of enjoying the blessedness of heaven. See Ridgely, vol. 2, pp. 139, 140.

without involving themselves in inextricable difficulties. If they deny that infants are elect, they close against them the gates of eternal glory. If they admit that they are chosen to salvation, then they must at once admit the doctrine of gratuitous, unconditional election, with all its tremendous consequences. For if infants are elect unto salvation, it cannot be pretended that they were elected on account of foreseen faith or works, or any other good thing in the creature. I say, if God has chosen them to life and glory, he must have chosen them "according to the counsel of his own will," and prompted by his own spontaneous mercy. Here, then, is a part of mankind, comprising at least one-fourth of the species, dying in infancy, and all subjects of free, sovereign, gratuitous election! Let us ask these brethren, Why does God take one infant to heaven, while as yet it is unstained with actual sin, and leave another to grow up in impenitence, to become polluted with crime, and sink at last under his fearful displeasure? What is this but sovereign, discriminating mercy, exerted to the utmost extent ever contended for by the most rigid Calvinist? Let me repeat the question: Why is one taken to glory in infancy, and another, born on the same day, spared to old age only to treasure up wrath against a day of wrath? Truly our Anti-Calvinist brethren cannot admit this doctrine of the election of infants, without involving their whole scheme in absolute ruin.

Again: these brethren are compelled to admit that infants cannot be saved without regeneration. But look for a moment at the consequences of such admission by Anti-Calvinists. Ask them the question, What if an infant should die before regeneration? "O," they will reply "infants cannot die before they are regenerated." Why, then, it follows that the unregenerated part of our species are immortal while in a state of infancy! Let no one start at this, for it is the only ground on which these brethren can resist the damnation of infants,—the immortality of the unregenerate while they are infants! The Calvinist easily avoids this appalling difficulty, since he holds that God has fore-ordained the salvation of infants, and consequently has ordained all the means necessary to its accomplishment. Thus their election secures their regeneration.

I am aware that some individuals have long been labouring to produce the impression that our church teaches the doctrine of "infant damnation." I say, *some individuals*, for I will not suppose that the great body of any Christian denomination are willing to countenance so wicked a slander. It has often been proved, and is well understood by the intelligent part of the community, that the Presbyterians do not now and never did maintain that doctrine. Nor, indeed, has there ever existed a Calvinistic body who maintained it.\*

\* More than two centuries ago, when the Calvinists were accused by their Arminian opponents of holding

Yet in opposition to the clearest evidence, these individuals either secretly or openly, by cowardly insinuation, or by confident assertion, labour to fix this stigma upon the members of our communion. No means are left untried to effect their object. So systematically and extensively has this sort of calumny been practised, in some parts of our country, that not a single Calvinistic minister can escape it by the most public and explicit disavowals. Certain individuals can be found who are willing to say they have heard him preach, "that there are infants in hell not a span long." Now, my friends, we must regard all this as an evidence of a persecuting spirit. As these men cannot wield the civil power against us, they will do what they can to punish us for holding doctrines which they cannot overthrow by fair and manly argument. God only knows the extent to which we might have to suffer for our religion, were it not for the protection of the laws! For if men will propagate the most wilful and deliberate untruths against us, as they certainly do, for no other offence than an honest difference of religious belief, what would they not do, if their power were equal to their wickedness? Presbyterians, however, can look beyond the agency of evil men, to the supreme Disposer of all events, and say with David, when Shimei cursed and cast

"that infants are torn away from the breasts of their mothers, and tyrannically precipitated into hell," the charge was indignantly repelled by the Synod of Dort. See the conclusion of their *Articles*.



stones at him, "Let them alone, for the Lord hath bidden them."\*

\* When the charge of teaching "infant damnation" is propagated by persons of any influence in society, the credit of religion may sometimes require the prompt exposure of the guilty author. This has been done in several instances of recent occurrence. Among others, an Anti-Calvinist preacher publicly asserted in Blairsville, Pa. that he had heard the Rev. John Walker, of New Athens, Ohio, preach "that there were infants in hell not a span long." Professor Walker, having been written to on the subject, says, in his reply; "I am sorry to be under the necessity of asserting that if Mr. — or any other person, did say, that he, or they heard me say, that any infant was damned, or that there were children in hell not a span long, it is a wilful and deliberate falsehood; and that for the credit of the religious society to which he belongs, they should call him to account," &c. *Blairsville Record, July 24th, 1844.*

A few years since an Anti-Calvinist minister asserted in Clarksburg, Va. "that he had left the Presbyterian Church on account of infant damnation; that the Presbyterians were *bound* to believe that doctrine, and that he knew hundreds that did believe it." The pastor of the Presbyterian church promptly called on him to furnish the name of at least one individual, out of the hundreds, who entertained such a belief. This, the preacher, notwithstanding the most earnest and pressing solicitations declined doing. Thus the slander was happily arrested.

Quite recently another Anti-Calvinist preacher asserted in Connellsville, Pa. that the Rev. Mr. G. had, on a specified occasion, avowed his belief in "infant damnation." On inquiry it was ascertained that Mr. G. *had expressed no opinion on the subject.*

Some propagators of this slander guard themselves as far as possible against the danger of exposure by bringing the accusation always against some deceased minister. We presume this is done on the principle that the dead cannot defend themselves.

6. It is objected that the doctrine of election is *unprofitable*, and ought not to be preached.

Let us ask the objector one question: Is it taught in the Scriptures? If it is, it cannot be unprofitable. "All Scripture," says an Apostle, "is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16. He does not say, all Scripture, except those parts which treat of Predestination, but "all Scripture—is profitable." And if so that is a good reason why it should be publicly expounded.

If any one ask, What are the practical uses of this doctrine? we answer: that it displays in the clearest light the true character and condition of sinners, as guilty and condemned, and fit only to be subjects of eternal wrath. It holds up to view the desperate wickedness of the hearts of men, as obstinately opposed to any terms of reconciliation with God, and shows us the unspeakable danger of continuing in unbelief. Sinners are apt to imagine that their sinful condition is their "misfortune rather than their fault;" that God is therefore bound to furnish them an adequate remedy; that he is nearly as dependent on them as they on him; and that if they see fit at any time to accept of salvation, they will be doing him about as great a favour as themselves. Against all this self-sufficiency and pride, the doctrine of Election strikes a fatal blow. It

tells the sinner that if he ever receive his just deserts, he will be excluded forever from the divine presence; that if he is ever saved, he will be indebted to the free, sovereign, and unmerited mercy of God; that if he choose to stay away from the feast, the purpose of God will not thereby be defeated; and that if the Lord see fit to pass him by among the rejecters of his mercy, no principle of equity or justice will be violated. This doctrine also teaches the Christian to "look back to the hole of the pit whence he was taken, and to the rock whence he was hewn," and adore the distinguishing mercy of God. It shows him what he would have been at this moment but for special, constraining grace, and teaches him to give all the glory of his salvation to God alone, who has "made him to differ" from others, as good by nature as himself. At the same time, it comforts and strengthens the believer in the certainty and confidence of his salvation, which originated in a love that had no beginning, and consequently will be without end.\* In a word, while it abases the sinner in the dust, it places God on the throne of the universe. It displays the glory of his mercy in snatching some as brands from the midst

\* This view of the subject is well presented by our Episcopal brethren, in the 17th of their xxxix Articles. "The godly consideration of Predestination, and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons; because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of everlasting salvation to be enjoyed through Christ." &c.

of the burning ; and that of his justice in leaving others to that punishment which their sins have so richly deserved.

Does any one ask, How may I know if I am one of the elect of God? In reply, we ask, How does the husbandman ascertain whether God has decreed that he shall reap a harvest from his fields? He uses the means which God's decree has connected with the end desired. He diligently prepares the soil and sows the seed. In a similar way you should seek for evidence of your election. Seek to possess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance toward God, and true holiness of heart and life. These are all so many evidences of election. The salvation to which God has chosen his people is a salvation effected "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." Come, then, to the gospel feast. Give yourselves to Christ, and then you may know that you were given to him by the Father. Disregard all the cavils with which some endeavour to perplex your minds on this subject. Go to the Saviour who will reject no wretched trembling sinner who sues to him for mercy. It is thus, and thus alone, that you can obtain an evidence of your election of God. And hence the Apostle exhorts us to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure." Not, as some appear to think, that we can make God more sure of the matter ; but we may become more sure of it ourselves.

Permit me now to apply the subject by

pressing every one who has not yet embraced the offers of the gospel to do so without delay. I come to announce in the name of my divine Master, that he has made "a great supper;" a feast for the hungry and famishing; a feast which speaks its value by the infinite price at which it was procured. It cost him all that he possessed. Though he was rich, he became poor to provide it. It cost him tears and blood and agonies unknown. To this feast I am sent to invite you. He has commanded me to bring in all, even as many as I should find. There is an ample sufficiency for all; and though thousands have taken their seats at the table, there is still abundant room. The Master of the feast promises you a welcome and cordial reception. He is now standing at the door of the banqueting house, crying, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." "Come, for all things are now ready." Do not, I beseech you, decline the generous invitation; do not treat infinite kindness with so much ingratitude, as to say, "I pray thee, have me excused." I take you all to record that you have now been invited to come. If you perish, therefore, it will not be because Christ did not offer to save you, nor because you did not hear of the offer, but because you were not willing to accept it. I am aware you may imagine that you have an excuse. You will say, perhaps, that you would like to come, but are not able. But let me assure you, that of all the excuses you can present to your

Maker, this is the most insulting. Believe me, your inability is your greatest sin. Its very essence is an opposition of heart to God and his Christ. If indeed you do deeply feel your inability, then go and humbly confess it before God, and convert it into a plea for the assistance of his grace, crying, "Lord, I would believe; help thou mine unbelief." But do not provoke him by turning it into an excuse for neglecting your salvation. My careless hearers, do you really believe that you are unable to come to Christ? If you do, how is it that you discover no anxiety on the subject? We know that when any important event over which you have no control, is in suspense, you always feel anxious in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake. If, for example, you were involved in a lawsuit which to all appearance might soon strip you of your worldly possessions, and you felt that you had no power to make any effectual resistance, you would be all anxiety on the subject; you would be roused to vigorous and untiring exertion to procure the assistance of others. And so, if you really believed that you must come to Christ, or perish in your sins, and felt unable of yourselves to come, you could not remain unconcerned about your condition. You would at once be awakened from your indifference, and cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" "Lord, save, or I perish!" As long, therefore, as you are careless, we must conclude that you are indulging a presumptuous confidence in your own ability to



secure your salvation. Be persuaded now to throw away all your excuses, and make the effort to come, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit. The door is still open; the feast is still waiting for you. Delay a little longer and the door will be forever shut. Soon the great Master of the feast will pass you by, saying, "As for those men that were bidden, they shall never taste of my supper." And now I have done. I can do no more. I cannot compel you to yield to the overtures of mercy. May the Lord, by the mighty influences of his Holy Spirit, constrain you to come to the feast, before the sentence go forth which shall forever exclude you from the gracious provision!

Finally: we trust there are many in this assembly who are rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in the evidence of their "election of God." To such I wish now, in the conclusion of this discourse, to propose one question. We ask you, my Christian brethren, Why were you made to hear the Redeemer's voice, while others as good by nature, and no worse by practice, are still standing aloof from the feast of the gospel? Why, I say, has God chosen to make you the subjects of his peculiar grace, while so many thousands are spurning the overtures of mercy? Can you ascribe it to the self-determination of your own hearts? If so, how came it that your hearts led you to Christ, while the hearts of so many others led them to reject him? Can you appeal to God

and say that your own self-originated choice has made you to differ from others? Is it in accordance with the feelings of your heart, or with your experience, to say, that God has chosen you to salvation on account of any good thing in yourselves? I think I can anticipate your reply. "Surely," you will say, "there was nothing in me to attract the merciful regard of my Heavenly Father. On the contrary, I was as much opposed to Christ and his salvation as any sinner upon earth. That I now differ from others in this respect is to be ascribed solely to the free unmerited favour of God. Had he not first chosen me, I never should have chosen him. And therefore "not unto us, not unto us, but to his name be all the glory for his mercy, and for his truth's sake." Such, I will take for granted, is the sentiment of every unsophisticated Christian heart in this assembly. And thus religious experience unites its testimony with that of revelation in ascribing every part of salvation to the spontaneous mercy of God in Christ. To him, therefore, my Christian friends, let us give all the glory. We have no right to take any part of it to ourselves. It all belongs to God. If you are Christians indeed, the day is coming when you will be called home to glory, and then you will see this truth in a light you have never beheld it in before. Then, how will appear a Father's love! How the everlasting covenant that drew you from the pit! Then will you sing

to your golden harps the endless song of grace. Then, however divided in sentiment here, all of every name will cast their crowns before the throne, and ascribe SALVATION TO GOD AND THE LAMB.

# THE GREAT SUPPER.

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## DISCOURSE SECOND.

“A certain man made a GREAT SUPPER and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.”—LUKE xiv. 16-24.

IN the former discourse, I endeavoured to avail myself of this interesting parable, in the illustration and defence of some of the distinguishing doctrines of the Reformation. In

doing so, I merely laid claim to the exercise of a right secured by the civil constitution to all persons, without exception, to whatever communion they may belong. This right is exercised by none more freely than by Anti-Calvinists, who not only labour diligently to impress their own views on the public mind, but not unfrequently endeavour to excite prejudice against the sentiments of others. Nor can any good reason be assigned why we should not enjoy all that freedom of speech which may justly be claimed by our brethren.

I am aware that a feeling exists in a certain quarter, that Calvinists have not the same right as others to preach and write in vindication of their religious belief. Many, even of those who are accustomed to attack our system with the utmost severity, from the pulpit, and who are extensively circulating books and tracts against us, take it as highly offensive if we lift up our voice, or employ the pen in our defence. We think this quite unreasonable. The laws of our country justify no such assumptions of exclusive right. Besides, in the glorious struggle which gave birth to our national freedom, Presbyterians poured forth at least their full proportion of treasure and blood; and they cannot consent tamely to surrender any part of those liberties which they assisted to purchase at so dear a rate. In exercising our right, however, on the present occasion, we hope to respect the feelings of those who differ with us in opinion. We trust you will do us the justice to believe

that we sincerely love and pray for all who love our common Saviour, to whatever denomination they may belong. We shall contend, not for victory, but for truth; not for party, but for principle; not for the interests of a sect, but for the honour of our divine Master. And we shall guard scrupulously against any misconstruction of the sentiments of others, not wishing by any means to impute to them opinions which they are known to disavow.

I. It was remarked in the former discourse, that the first great truth presented to view in the parable before us, is the *sufficiency of the atonement of Christ*; a truth which has ever been believed and taught in the Presbyterian Church. Nay, in some instances, the whole Calvinistic world have united in the declaration, that “the death of Christ is a most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value and price; abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.” I will go further. There is, as Dr. John Owen observes, “a sense in which Christ may be said to die for all, and the whole world. His death was of sufficient dignity to have been made a ransom for all the sins of every one in the world; and on this internal sufficiency is grounded the universality of the gospel offers.” *Displ. Armin.* ch. 9. We also admit most cheerfully, that Christ died intentionally to save *all believers*. Hence he declares, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” And we wish you distinctly to un-



derstand, that when Calvinists deny that "Christ died for all," they only mean to deny that he died "for all" in the sense in which that expression is explained by their opponents. That is, they mean to deny that he died for all men in the *same sense*, and with the *same intention*. Accordingly, our Confession of Faith, ch. 8, sec. 8, affirms, that "to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply the same." This passage serves as a guard against the idea, that the Saviour may be defeated in any of the great designs which were to be accomplished by his death. And here we believe, after all, lies the main point of dispute in regard to the atonement. Among those who agree as to its nature, the chief question in debate is, What is its design? What was it intended to effect? This assertion is not made on my own individual authority. All who have been best qualified by learning and experience, have stated the question in this form. Among others, the celebrated Francis Turretin, successor of Calvin in the theological chair of Geneva, in his Institutes, Qu. 14, on the Atonement, says, "The question is not concerning the value and sufficiency of the death of Christ; but the hinge of the controversy is, the design of God in sending his Son into the world, and the intention of Christ in expiring on the cross." So, also, the distinguished Dr. Ridgley, in vol. 2, page 309, says, "It is allowed on both sides, especially by all that own the divinity

and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world. The main question before us is, whether God *designed* the salvation of all men by the death of Christ?"

This question was briefly discussed in the former discourse: and we endeavoured to point out some of the consequences which would flow from the belief that Christ died intentionally to save all mankind. Such a belief must inevitably lead to Socinianism on the one hand, or to Universalism on the other. If, in the first place, to avoid the doctrine of universal salvation, we assert, that though Christ intended to save all, yet all will not be saved; what is this but to affirm that the Saviour may be disappointed in his expectations, and defeated in regard to his most glorious designs? What is it but to strip him of his divine perfections and reduce him to the level of a creature? \* And then what confidence can be placed in the promises of a being whose intentions have been thwarted in many millions of instances? But if, on the other hand, to escape these revolting consequences we assert that the Lord Jesus not only intends

\* The Remonstrants with Arminius for their leader, boldly asserted that "the hope and expectation of God is disappointed by man!" *Rem. Scrip. Syn.* And a distinguished Arminian divine says, that "God in his measure sometimes *fearth*, that is, has reasons to suspect, and prudently conjectureth that this or that evil will arise." *Vorstius de Deo.* p. 351. These old Arminians might at least claim the merit of consistency.

to save all, but that being God he cannot be disappointed in his expectations, we plunge at once into the abyss of Universalism.

Pressed with these formidable difficulties, Anti-Calvinists sometimes take refuge in what they call *conditional* decrees or intentions. Conditional intentions in the mind of God! Can you tell what this means, my hearers? We know not what it means, unless that different and opposite intentions exist in the divine mind suspended in uncertainty on doubtful conditions. It means, if it have any meaning, that God conditionally intended to save all mankind, and at the same time conditionally intended to damn all mankind; but could not positively make up his mind what he would do, till he should wait and see how affairs would turn out. Only assert conditional decrees and you must suppose God ignorant of the result; or that he has not made up his mind respecting it, and has left it to chance, and that he is dependent on his creatures for the accomplishment of his favourite purposes. By the way, this doctrine of conditional intentions reminds us of some improvident State brought to the verge of bankruptcy, but conditionally intending to pay her honest debts, that is, on condition that she can command a sufficient revenue; but if not, she must repudiate! Who, unless driven by hard necessity, would ever think of ascribing such intentions to God?

And here you may perceive the immense advantage we possess over our opponents, in

presenting the offers of the gospel. The Anti-Calvinist holds out an overture based upon a divine intention to save, which has, by his own account, been already defeated in numberless instances. The Calvinist presents an offer grounded upon the infinite sufficiency and applicability of a Saviour's blood, accompanied with an assurance to him who accepts it, that he "shall in no wise be cast out." The Anti-Calvinist can only offer you a "possible," or "conditional," and therefore *uncertain* salvation. The Calvinist holds out a free, everlasting, unconditional salvation to all who will come to Christ. The one offers you the notes of a suspended bank, which are of conditional or doubtful value. The other offers you the pearl of price unknown, possessing which your fortune is secured forever.

But to return from this digression, where do our brethren get their authority for saying that God intends the salvation of all men? Will they find it in the declaration they so often adduce from 1 Tim. ii. 4, that "God our Saviour . . . will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth?" And do they perceive nothing in this verse to restrict its meaning? God wills indeed, that all men should come unto the knowledge of the truth, in exactly the same sense in which he wills that all men should be saved. The one proposition is just as broadly asserted as the other, and the fact that all are not savingly enlightened is the best possible proof that all are not saved; and if all are not saved, it

cannot be that God expected or intended the salvation of all. This passage only shows that it is the will of God that all should be saved who come to him in the way prescribed in the gospel, and that it is our duty to spread abroad "the knowledge of the truth," as the great means of the salvation of men.

Will our brethren adduce the famous declaration of Peter, that the Lord "is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance?" 2 Pet. iii. 9. But here they are equally unfortunate; for why is repentance willed in inseparable connexion with salvation? Unless, therefore, it can be shown that God brings all men to repentance, the passage cannot prove that God intends to save all, much less that he means to save the finally impenitent. It teaches, however, that God wills the death of no sinner on account of any pleasure he takes therein. If he sends impenitent sinners to perdition, it is because his own glory and the highest good of the universe require their punishment. Owing to his reluctance to punish, and his willingness to save, he is long-suffering, and to this trait of the divine character, many are indebted for their salvation.

Or will they insist upon the declaration that Christ, "by the grace of God tasted death for every man." Heb. ii. 9. • Need they be informed that the word "man" is not found in the original; and that the most literal translation of the text is, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for *every one*." That

is, for every one of those "sons" which the next verse tells us he is bringing to glory. And thus in all those passages in which Christ is said to have "died for all" and to be "a propitiation for the whole world," it would be easy to show that the context requires us to limit the declaration to "all" *believers*. Or, admitting for argument's sake that such passages should be understood in the most universal sense, they will only prove that Christ's sufferings were *sufficient* for the redemption of all men; in which sense we acknowledge he died for all. But they cannot prove that he expected, or intended to save all mankind.

For whom, then, did the Saviour shed his precious blood? What say the Scriptures?

1. In the first place, they speak of those whom Christ died to save, as *believers*. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." v. 16. Here you perceive that God's saving purpose, instead of embracing all mankind, is expressly limited to those that should believe on his Son—"That whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish." So also speaks an Apostle. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness . . . that he might be



just and the justifier of him that *believeth* in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26.

2. Those whom Christ designed to save by his death are called his *sheep*. "I am the good shepherd," says he, "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John x. 11. And again, "I lay down my life for the sheep." v. 15. He does not say, for all mankind, but for "the sheep." Who are meant by "the sheep," is manifest from the following verses, "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

3. Those for whom Christ shed his blood are called his *Church*, of which he is the Head. "Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Eph. v. 25, 26.

4. Those whom Christ died to save are those who *actually experience his salvation*. Thus, "Christ *hath redeemed us* from the curse of the law, being made a curse *for us*." Gal. iii. 13. "Who gave himself *for us*, that he might redeem *us* from all iniquity, and purify unto himself *a peculiar people*, zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14. "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up *for us all*, how shall he not with him also *freely give us all things?*" Rom. viii. 32. "Who his own self bare *our* sins in his own body on

the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes *ye were healed.*" 1 Peter ii. 24. "He was wounded *for our* transgressions, he was bruised *for our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him, and with his stripes *we are healed*"—"and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us* all." Isa. liii. 5, 6. "For the transgression of *my people* was he stricken." verse 8. In these passages the special objects of the Saviour's interposition are described as "redeemed [by his death] from the curse of the law," as a "peculiar people," as those to whom God "freely gives all things," as "healed" of their spiritual malady; in a word they are represented as actually partaking of the benefits of redemption.

5. Those for whose salvation Christ died are those for whom he *prayed*. Had he designed the salvation of all men alike, he would undoubtedly have prayed for the salvation of all. If he had done this, there could not be a doubt of the final salvation of all men; for the blessed Jesus never prayed in vain. He himself says to the Father, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always." John xi, 41.\* For whom then

\* The Rev. A. Young strenuously maintains that Christ prayed in vain. By way of proof, he adduces the prayer for his murderers, "Father, forgive them," which the Rev. gentleman contends the Father refused to grant! *Mar. Din.* Surely nothing but stern necessity could drive a man to so impious a position. Readers of the Bible need not to be informed that this prayer

did he pray? Not for all mankind, but for them that should *believe* on him, and for those that were *given* him. In that remarkable prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of John, he says expressly, "I pray not for the world." v. 9. And in the 20th verse, having prayed for his beloved disciples, he adds, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also *who shall believe* on me through their word." And again, (v. 24,) "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast *given* me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." And for whom does he now intercede? Not for all men, but for those who approach him by faith. "Wherefore," says Paul, "he is able to save them to the uttermost *that come unto God by him*, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession *for them*." Heb. vii. 25. All for whom he intercedes may say with the Apostle, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also *maketh intercession for us*." Rom. viii. 34.

Let us now examine the standards of other denominations with reference to this point. The Cumberland Confession of Faith in ch. 8, sec. 1, teaches that the Father promised to the Son "a *seed* to be by him in time redeemed, called by his word and Spirit, justified by his grace, sanctified and glorified." How can this

was fulfilled to the utmost extent contemplated by the Saviour. See Acts ii. 22—47.

be reconciled with the idea that God intends the salvation of all men alike? The same Confession tells us that "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus *justified*, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." ch. 11, sec. 3. "God before the foundation of the world determined to justify *all true believers*; and Christ did in the fulness of time die for *their sins*." sec. 4. And again, "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself . . . hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation; but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all *those who come to the Father by him*." ch. 8, sec. 5. Now let the question be asked, For whose sins did Christ die? whose debt did he discharge? for whom has he fully satisfied the justice of God? for whom purchased an inheritance? This Confession answers, for the "seed," for "those that are justified," for "all true believers," for "those who come to the Father by him." If therefore, our Cumberland brethren will adhere to the Confession which they have professed before God "sincerely to receive and adopt," they cannot blame us with restricting the atonement to narrower limits than they do themselves. But if they do not sincerely adopt their Confession, it is palpably wrong to send it forth to the world as an expression of their sentiments.

Our Methodist friends, in their 20th Article

of Religion, say, "The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." We are sorry to differ from these brethren; but if a perfect satisfaction has been made for all the sins of all mankind, we cannot see how any can finally perish, except on the supposition that a perfect satisfaction does not satisfy divine justice. This point is discussed in so admirable a manner by the Rev. Wm. Annan, in his truly able work, "The Difficulties of Arminian Methodism," that I cannot forbear to transcribe a passage:

"If all," says he, "of every description of character, have a 'perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction' completed for them, how can any be lost? Wesley has answered, 'Because they *believe not* on the only begotten Son of God.' But is this unbelief, this rejection of Christ, a sin? If not a sin, it can do them no harm at the great day of decision. 'Nil, nisi peccatum timeo.' But if it be a sin, then the article declares that a perfect satisfaction has been made for all the sins of the whole world; and of course for unbelief, as well as for other sins. How then can it be a cause of perdition? If it be just to punish *this sin* with everlasting torments, after a 'perfect propitiation and satisfaction' have been made for it, it will be equally just and right to punish *all sin* for which Christ died. Both law and justice, then, will take the redeemed sinner by the throat at the day of judgment, and each urge

its demand, 'pay me what thou owest,' as inexorably as though no Saviour had ever suffered and died for his salvation. Who then can be saved? Here is the dilemma: If unbelief be not a sin, it cannot be a cause of future misery; it can do the sinner no harm. If unbelief be a sin, a 'perfect satisfaction' is made for it, as for all sin; and still it can do the sinner no harm, unless a sin for which a perfect satisfaction is made, and the whole debt paid, can be again called up for satisfaction, and the debt again exacted. In the former case, no one can be lost; in the latter no one can be saved. This doctrine of a perfect satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, must land us either in universal salvation, or universal perdition." pp. 134—5.

But why any longer pursue this subject? Further argument upon it must be altogether superfluous. You cannot admit that Jesus Christ intended to save all mankind. What then? Will any one have the boldness to assert that he had no definite object in view? Shall we be told that he had no particular design to save any one? \* Is it no more a faithful saying "that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*?" And did he descend

\* "Christ," says a famous Arminian author, "did not properly die for the salvation of any one." *Grevinch. ad Ames.* fol. 8. "The end of Christ's death," says another, "would be attained, even though no one should believe on him." *Corvinus ad Molin.* cap. 27. As though Christ would be "satisfied" without seeing "of the travail of his soul!"



from heaven and pour out his blood on the cross, with no certain, specific object in view? You will not, you *cannot* assume so extravagant a position. You will grant that the Lord Jesus died with a view to the salvation of some sinners. He could not have intended the salvation of all, but did intend the salvation of some; and is able to carry his intentions into effect. Will you admit this, my hearers? Then we do not ask you to assume the name of Calvinist, if you object to the term, though you admit in substance a principal point in the Calvinistic system; viz: that Christ did not die for all, in the same sense, and with the same intention.

But though constrained to reject an opinion which would drive us to the alternative of Socinianism on the one hand, or of Universalism on the other, we not only admit, but earnestly contend, that the provision of the gospel is just as sufficient for the salvation of all, as if all were to be actually saved. And hence you may see that those, who, for sinister purposes, hold up Calvinists as absurdly "inviting an exhausted traveller to satisfy his hunger from an empty plate," are guilty of gross and inexcusable misrepresentation. The sufferings of Christ were not only sufficient for all, but actually secure the salvation of all who are truly willing to come to him. And therefore, if any do not experience their saving efficacy, it is, to use the words of our Confession, "because they never truly come to Christ." That they do not come to him, is ascribable solely to the

voluntary blindness and cherished depravity of their own hearts.

II. It has indeed been often asserted, that we describe sinners as *physically unable*, and as "bound hand and foot," and yet punished for not coming to Christ. There is not a word of truth in such statements. It was shown in a former discourse, that our brethren of other communions, even those most hostile in their feelings towards us, state the sinner's inability quite as strongly as we do ourselves. It may not be uninteresting to present some additional evidences of this singular fact.

The Protestant Episcopal Church, in their Articles of Religion, Art. 10, express their doctrinal views, in the following words: "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

Our brethren of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in their 18th Article, say, "Concerning free will, our Churches teach that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the control of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedi-

ence: for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God; but this is accomplished in the heart, *when* the Holy Spirit is received *through the word.*" This Article at least precludes the idea, so common among Anti-Calvinists, that all men, at all times, have a sufficient "gracious ability."

The Confession of our Cumberland brethren, as we have already seen, declares that "man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good." Some indeed will say, that this is a description of a mere imaginary state, in which man would have existed, but for the mediation of Christ. And they allege that through the atonement, many unhappy consequences of the fall have been prevented, so that all are born with sufficient ability to become holy; and thus the inability in question exists only in idea. Against this Pelagian notion the Cumberland Confession is effectually guarded. It represents the inability of the sinner as remaining till the period of conversion. It declares that, "When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone *enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good.*" Ch. 9. sec. 4. In another place it represents the inability as remaining till the sinner is *effectually called*. In chap. 10, sec. 2, under the head of "Effectual Calling," it says, "This call is of God's

free grace alone, not from any good thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether dead in sin, until being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he is *thereby enabled to answer this call*, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." Nay, according to this Confession, not even converted men are able to do all that God requires: for it asserts that "they, who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is *possible* in this life, . . . fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do." Ch. 16, sec. 4. These passages are so explicit as to need no comment.\* And they furnish an illustration of a remarkable fact, namely, that no scheme of doctrine, even

\* The ministers and elders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church are required, at their ordination, solemnly to declare before God and the congregation, that they "*sincerely receive and adopt* the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." *Form of Gov.* ch. 14, 15 and 16. One would imagine that this might afford ample security against material innovation. Yet the fact that so many of their leading ministers preach in opposition to the doctrines of their Confession, has given rise to the remark by some, "That they profess one thing and teach another;" by others, "That they play fast and loose with their published creed," and that they "range at pleasure from rigid Calvinism down to the most lax Pelagianism, with a view to proselyte Presbyterians on one hand, and Methodists and Lutherans on the other." It cannot be denied that there is too much room for remarks of this kind. Yet there are among them, as the writer has reason to know, many estimable persons, who are doubtless grieved at the laxity of doctrine and discipline tolerated in spite of the authority of their Standards.

approaching an evangelical character, can be attempted by any denomination, without introducing some of the peculiar features of the Calvinistic system.

But confessions of faith are of no value except as they are founded on the sacred word. The question of man's ability must, after all, be decided by the voice of inspiration. What, then, do the advocates of ability derive from this source in confirmation of their views? Will they tell us that Jesus Christ "was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world?" John i. 9. What has this to do with the subject? It may mean that Christ has enlightened every man with the light of reason and conscience; but it does not prove that every man is spiritually and savingly enlightened, much less that all men have sufficient ability. They will, perhaps, cite us 1 Cor. xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" from which they argue that all men are quickened, or made alive by the Spirit. But if they would turn to the place and look at the context, they would discover that the Apostle is speaking of the resurrection of the last day, and has not the slightest reference to the influences of the Spirit. Again, they urge that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7. Here, also, by looking at the passage, you will see that Paul has no manner of reference to the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, but to his visible "mani-

festation" in the miraculous gifts conferred upon the Christians of the primitive ages. These extraordinary gifts, he contends, were bestowed upon every man who possessed them, not to gratify personal vanity, but with a view to profit or edify others. So slight is the foundation on which our brethren build their theory of universal ability! It vanishes with a touch. On the other hand, the Scriptures assert the opposite doctrine with a clearness and force which cannot be evaded. "The carnal mind," that is, the unrenewed mind, "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. Will our brethren say that Paul is here speaking of an imaginary state, which, in consequence of the atonement, never actually existed? But read the very next verse. "So, then, *they that are in the flesh* cannot please God." Here it cannot be denied that the Apostle is speaking of persons now in the flesh; and he asserts that they "cannot please God." Does this look like the doctrine of universal ability? Paul also writes to the Ephesians, "And you hath he quickened who *were dead* in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1. And then, as if to show that he had reference to what was the actual condition of all men previous to conversion, he adds in the 5th verse, "Even *when we were dead* in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved." It is evident from these passages, that men are in a state of spiritual death until renewed by the



Spirit; and consequently while in that state, cannot be said to possess sufficient spiritual strength. Once more; our Saviour says to his disciples: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 13. Now, if it be true that God has withheld his Spirit from no one, but has bestowed upon all men his quickening and sanctifying influences, as far as necessary to their salvation, then we can see no force or meaning in this passage. Certainly, if the doctrine of our Anti-Calvinist friends be true, the disciples might have replied, "Nay, Lord, why should we ask for the Holy Spirit? Do not all men experience his enlightening and quickening influences? Do not all possess sufficient ability to believe and become holy? What need we do more, then, than to give thanks that we already possess this inestimable gift, in a measure sufficient to accomplish our salvation?" Thus it may be seen, that the doctrine of our brethren has a manifest tendency to discourage prayer. It also nourishes a spirit of self-sufficiency and self-confidence. It flatters the sinner with the dangerous notion that he is "rich and increased in goods, and has need of nothing." It promotes and multiplies spurious conversions, and exerts a pernicious influence even upon good men. It was because Peter trusted too much in the sufficiency of his ability, that he was left to feel the sad consequences of his folly and

weakness. None should ever forget those words of Christ, "Without me, ye can do nothing."

You will already have perceived, that our Anti-Calvinist brethren materially differ from us in regard to the actual condition of the sinner, previous to conversion. As this difference has a bearing upon the subject in hand, we shall give it a brief notice. They maintain that man by the fall lost that freedom of will which is essential to accountability; and that were it not for the atonement through which all men receive the enlightening and quickening influences of the Spirit, inspiring them with a "gracious ability," they would cease to be accountable creatures, and therefore could not justly be held liable to punishment.\*

\* This view is advocated by the Methodist General Conference, in their volume of Doctrinal Tracts, p. 154. "We believe," say they, "that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left." And again: "We say that man hath his freedom of will not naturally, but by grace." Dr. W. Fisk asserts that none but "a most merciless tyrant" would hold men responsible in the condition in which they were left by the fall. *Disc.* p. 13. "Adam," says Dr. Clarke, "appears to have lost all his spiritual light and understanding, and even his moral feeling;" and such, he argues would have been Adam's posterity "had not some gracious principle been restored to enlighten their minds, to give them some knowledge of good and evil, of right and wrong, of virtue and vice." The Cumberland Presbyterians, in the Article they have had inserted in Buck's Theological Dictionary, take similar ground. They say, "that the Spirit of God operates on the world, or as co-extensively as Christ has made the atonement, in such

We remark, 1. If this theory be true, mankind stood in no absolute need of a Saviour: for if they were left by the fall in a state in which they were excusable and irresponsible, a just and holy God would not have inflicted on them the smallest punishment. Thus the whole race would have been saved from perdition in perfect consistency with justice, and without the amazing expense of redemption.

2. Agreeably to this theory, the great design of the Saviour's death was not to save men from punishment, for left to themselves, they would not have been amenable to justice; but only to restore them to a state of accountability and thus render them liable to punishment. And yet this is what our brethren call *grace*!

3. According to this theory, the atonement has proved a curse rather than a blessing to mankind. For had all been suffered to remain in the state of irresponsibility in which they were left by the fall, all would have escaped punishment. By the scheme of redemption only a part are saved; and thus, what our brethren call *grace*, instead of bringing salvation, brings only damnation!

You need scarcely to be informed that man has never lost his natural freedom of will. That freedom, so essential to accountability, can never be lost even by devils and damned

a manner as to leave all men inexcusable:" implying that without the Holy Spirit, men would be excusable or irresponsible for their actions.

spirits, who are still responsible, and justly punishable for every new transgression.

“But,” say our brethren, “all men may be saved *if they will*.” Very well. But what *if they will not*? Here is the formidable obstacle in the way of man’s salvation: he *will not* be saved on the terms of the gospel. And unless this obstacle is removed by the special grace of God, no sinner will hearken to the overtures of salvation.

III. The grand truth last asserted is beautifully illustrated in the parable which is the foundation of these discourses. A great supper was prepared. The servant went forth and proclaimed to them that were bidden, “Come, for all things are now ready.” And did they come? Were any led by their self-determining wills to embrace the generous offer? Not one. And what if the master of the house had not decided to constrain any to accept his invitation? Not one would ever have tasted his supper. And thus, too, if God had not determined by his grace effectually to draw some to the Saviour, not an individual of the race would ever have accepted the offer of salvation. He knew from eternity the character that would be possessed by our fallen race. He knew that they would possess corrupt, rebellious dispositions, and that they would expose themselves to his wrath. Yet, moved by infinite mercy, he determined to rescue a part of the race from perdition. In accordance with this glorious design, he resolved to send into the world his Son Jesus

Christ to prepare a great salvation. And he would send forth his ministering servants to offer this salvation to the whole human family. But he also knew from eternity, that notwithstanding the plenteous provision of the gospel,—sufficient for all, adapted to all, offered to all,—without his special interference all would make excuse and reject its gracious overtures. No power possessed by his ministering servants,—no zeal or eloquence, would be sufficient to constrain a single individual to lay down the weapons of rebellion and be reconciled to God. And he saw from eternity that unless his almighty Spirit should interpose in the glory of his grace, and bow the stubborn heart of the sinner, all would be lost, and Christ would shed his blood in vain. These appalling consequences God resolved to prevent. He was not willing that the whole race should perish. He was determined to save some,—to rescue a part of the human family from themselves, and from everlasting woe. And this glorious, eternal purpose, he is now carrying into effect wherever the gospel is proclaimed. He sends down the Spirit with his special influences to give efficacy to the means of grace, and renews, sanctifies, and saves rebellious sinners, sweetly constraining them to approach the Saviour for pardon and reconciliation.

Such is the doctrine of sovereign, gratuitous, eternal election; and from the view which has been taken we may learn,

1. That it is not true that election *originat-*

*ed in hell.* This is sometimes asserted by its warm opponents. But it is, to say the least, very unguarded language. It is quite certain that Satan would never have suggested so glorious a scheme of mercy. If Satan had been consulted on the subject, he would doubtless have proposed that all should be left to the self-determination of their own wills, for in that case he would be quite sure of their damnation.

2. It is equally clear that election places no one under the *unavoidable necessity of being damned*. It simply says that some shall be saved through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. To recur to the parable; the fact that some were compelled to come in, did not alter the condition of others. It threw no impediment in the way of their coming. Neither does election throw an obstruction in the way of any sinner's salvation. On the contrary, it is clear according to this doctrine, that those who stay away from Christ do so because it is their free choice. They do not, therefore, perish by necessity. Still less are they injured by election. Election ruin souls! No: it never yet sent one to hell, but it has taken many to heaven.

3. Nor does it follow from election that the damnation of sinners is owing to the sovereign will of God. As well might it be said, that when the master of the house resolved that the despisers of his bounty should never taste his supper, their exclusion turned altogether upon his sovereign will. The damna-



tion of sinners is just as much owing to their own sin, as if there were none elected to salvation.

4. Nor does it result from the election of grace that the elect may be saved without faith and holiness. The master of the house did not determine that certain persons should enjoy his rich repast without complying with his invitation, but he constrained many to a compliance, in order that they might partake of it. So God in his purpose of election determines to bring men to Christ, and to make them holy, in order to their salvation. When Calvinists say that election is *unconditional*, they do not intend to deny that faith and holiness are conditions, or rather we should say *terms* of salvation, without which no one can obtain eternal life. But they mean that God has unconditionally determined, by his grace, to bring a portion of mankind to a compliance with these very terms, in order to their final salvation. He has decreed the means as well as the end. He did not choose men to eternal life *on account of* foreseen faith and holiness, or any other goodness in the creature, but he elected them to faith and holiness, that they might have eternal life. He could not have foreseen any moral excellence in men, except as the product of his own gracious influences; and therefore in choosing any to salvation he must have been prompted solely by his own spontaneous mercy. And this is all that is asserted in that passage of our Confession of Faith, so often garbled and misrepresented,

cap. 3, sec. 5. "God hath chosen them in Christ, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, *as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto* ; and all to the praise of his glorious grace." You perceive that this passage does not deny that God foresaw the faith and works of his elect as the *product of his grace* ; but it denies simply that their faith and works were the *moving causes of their election* ; that gracious purpose having originated solely in the divine mercy.\*

\* In the Methodist Doctrinal Tracts, page 8, the above passage is mutilated in the following manner : "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, without any foresight of faith or good works." Here the most important members of the sentence are omitted, and the meaning essentially changed, in order to sustain against Calvinists the charge of teaching a salvation without faith and holiness. Dr. W. Fisk garbles the passage in the same way, and employs it for the same purpose.

In one of the Tracts in the same volume, entitled "The Consequence Proved," p. 176, is the following passage, "Mr. Toplady, a young bold man, lately published a pamphlet, an extract from which was soon after printed, concluding with these words: 'The sum of all is this: one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected, nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will, and the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can.'" It is observable that no clue is given by which to ascertain where this strange passage may be found in Toplady's writings; and no one has yet been able to produce it. Mr. Toplady, in the appendix to his work on Predestination, pronounces it a "shameless forgery." And it must be confessed

We shall now offer some further arguments in support of this doctrine, and make our appeal,

1. To the Holy Scriptures.

And here our first inquiry shall be, what says the great INFALLIBLE TEACHER? Let us sit at his feet and learn of Him.

He was "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," to be a Mediator between God and man. 1 Peter i. 20. He entered into a covenant engagement "to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. xx. 28. But can you believe, my hearers, that he would undertake the dreadful work on an uncertainty? Would he consent to endure the agonies of the cross, and the wrath of a sin-avenging God, trusting to chance, or the depraved will of man for the reward of his death? No:—he clearly foresaw, that in such an event, not one sinner would be rescued from perdition, nor would he obtain the smallest recompense for his sufferings. Hence, it was rendered certain, from eternity that a portion of the human family should experience the benefits of his salvation. We read of a promise of eternal life, made before the world began: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Titus i. 1, 2. To whom was this promise made? Not to creatures; for they

that all his writings teach the very reverse of what is here imputed to him.

were not then in existence, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. The ancient prophets frequently refer to this promise, made to the Messiah. Says Isaiah,—“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Isa. liii. 10, 11. And the Psalmist, referring to the Messiah, says,—“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.” And addressing the Saviour,—“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” Ps. xxii. 30 and cx. 3. Accordingly the Lord Jesus speaks of those that were promised him, with peculiar tenderness, as *his sheep*, and as those that were *given him* by the Father. “I lay down my life for the sheep.” John x. 15. “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which *gave them me*, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” John x. 26—29. Elect Gentiles are counted as sheep. “And *other sheep* I have, which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice;” chap. x. 16. And alluding to the promise of the everlasting covenant, he says, “All that the Father *giveth*

*me*, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he *hath given me* I should lose nothing." John vi. 37—39. It has been alleged that *all men* were given to Christ; but if so, universal salvation must be true; for Christ will "lose nothing." To his heavenly Father he says, "Thou hast given him [the Son of man] power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to *as many as thou hast given him*." John xvii. 2. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast *given me*; for they are thine." v. 9. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast *given me* be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." John xvii. 24. To the mother of Zebedee's children, he said, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them *for whom it is prepared* of my Father." Matt. xx. 23. Many of our Lord's hearers were offended with these words: they "went back and walked with him no more." Are any of you also offended? Remember they are the words of Christ, which can never pass away. You may try to disbelieve them, but the time is coming when conviction will be pressed upon you with a power of eloquence infinitely surpassing that of mortal tongue. The day is approaching when you shall see the Son of Man in dreadful glory,

descending from heaven attended by ten thousand of his saints. He will “send forth his angels and gather *his elect* from the four winds.” Then will he say to them, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*” Matt. xxv. 34. Thus will the doctrine of election be proclaimed to the assembled universe, and every mouth be stopped, and every cavil silenced forever.\*

In the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a remarkable passage which it is very hard to explain away, and difficult to mis-

\* It has been alleged that the Lord Jesus suffered some that were given him to be lost; but if so, he did not do the will of the Father. For he himself says, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing.” John vi. 39. Still it is contended that the fact may be proved from John xvii. 12,—“Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.” From this passage, it is argued that the son of perdition must have been given to Christ. But this is a gross mistake, arising from a misunderstanding of the peculiar idiom used by the sacred writers. The very same idiom is observable in Luke iv. 27,—“Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” It might just as well be argued from this passage that Naaman was a “leper in Israel,” though it is the design of the sacred writer to make it plain that he was not. The meaning may be given thus: “Many lepers were in Israel, in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed—but Naaman the Syrian” (was cleansed.) And so in John xvii. 12, the sense is, “Those that thou gavest me, I have kept; and none of them is lost—but the son of perdition, (is lost,) that the scripture might be fulfilled.”



understand. The Apostle Paul had seen with sorrow that "all are not Israel that are of Israel;" and he felt that the salvation of men was dependent on the sovereign grace of God. He saw distinguishing mercy every where. To all human appearance, Ishmael was as fit a subject of the promise as Isaac. They were the children of the same father; yet it was written, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," v. 7. And so in reference to Jacob and Esau, he adds, "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." v. 11, 12, 13. It is admitted, my friends, that the word "hate" is here used in a comparative sense, and simply marks the preference which God had for Jacob. We also admit that the passage, so far as it concerns Jacob and Esau, may refer rather to the distinction made between them, and between their several posterities in the present world. Still the argument in favour of our doctrine, remains in all its force. For the apostle adduces the case of these well-known individuals for the avowed purpose of illustrating and proving the doctrine of sovereign election. The drift of his argument obviously is; that as God, in the exercise of sovereignty, distinguished the family of Jacob from that of Esau by peculiar spiritual blessings; so he distinguishes one person from an-

other by the special operations of his grace. The apostle well knew that the human heart would rise in rebellion against this doctrine; and therefore goes on in the next verse to anticipate the common and popular objection to it. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" Now we all know this to be one of the principal objections our Anti-Calvinist brethren make against a gracious election. They say it makes God "cruel and unjust," "an unmerciful tyrant," and "worse than the devil." *Doct. Tracts*, p. 170. But mark the Apostle's answer. "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." v. 15. Here is sovereignty, such as was displayed by the master of the house in the parable, who finally brought to the feast those whom he would. The apostle adds immediately, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Here let me say again, if this apostle held the opinions of modern Anti-Calvinists it is perfectly astounding that he should use this language. What opponent of election ever expressed himself in this manner? On the contrary, Anti-Calvinists say, that the acceptance of salvation depends upon man's self-determining will; in other words, that it is of him that willeth and of him that runneth. But the apostle asserts the very reverse, and maintains that while all are alike unworthy, and all alike

refuse the overtures of salvation, it is sovereign mercy which makes the difference. He next proceeds to notice a striking instance of an individual left to the blinding influence of his own depravity. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." vs. 17, 18. That is, he leaves them to the hardening influence of unbelief. In the following verse the apostle brings forward another objection very commonly urged in our day, against the election of grace. "Thou wilt say then, unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" v. 19. Here again you perceive he adduces almost the exact language of the modern opponents of this doctrine. He answers, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" vs. 20, 21. He evidently considers mankind as all belonging to the same original "lump." All are alike sinners deserving of his wrath. All alike are unwilling to accept the salvation of the gospel. And may not a God of infinite wisdom and benevolence display his mercy in bringing some to the gospel-feast; and his justice in leaving others to the sad consequen-

ces of their unbelief? Such is the import of this masterly answer of the apostle. I am aware that some would have us believe that he is all along maintaining simply an election of *nations*. But look at the verses following, and see if they do not teach an election of *persons out of different nations*. “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction;” that is, that fitted themselves for destruction; “and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory; even *us* whom he hath called, *not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*.” vs. 22—24. I leave this remarkable passage without further comment, believing that no truly candid, intelligent mind can resist the conviction that it teaches the doctrine of sovereign, gratuitous election.

2. This doctrine may be argued from *the promise of the future enlargement and universal prosperity of the Church*.

God has promised his church, that at some future period, fixed by himself, “all shall know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.” “I will declare the *decree*,” says Messiah. “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Psalm ii. 7, 8. When this period arrives, “the people shall all be righteous;” for the Lord

Jesus will carry into full effect that declaration to his disciples,—“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” John xii. 32. Then “the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in; and so all Israel shall be saved.” Rom. xi. 25, 26. Here, then, is a solemn promise of him who is the Lord, and changes not; a promise founded upon a fixed determination, or “decree.” During the period of “a thousand years,” or perhaps a period of much greater duration, God has purposed, according to his “counsels of old,” to bring all the inhabitants of this earth to the enjoyment of salvation; and has also determined the means by which it shall be accomplished. And his determination gives absolute certainty to the event. What is this but the doctrine of election, which simply affirms that God, of his free grace and love, has purposed to make a portion of mankind the subjects of his grace? And as all who shall be born during the promised happy period, will certainly possess that native aversion to God and holiness, which characterizes the whole race, no reason can be assigned, why all that live on the earth during that particular period, should be righteous, except that God has determined to bring them to the gospel-feast. Nor can we allege any other reason why God should choose them to salvation in preference to many previous generations of men, than “the good pleasure of his will.” And the objection that it represents God as partial, that it conflicts with free agency,—indeed all the arguments usually urged

against election, lie with equal force against the promise of the future extension and prosperity of the Church.\*

3. The truth of this doctrine may be evinced from the *unchangeableness* of God. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" Job xxiii. 13. "Without any variableness or shadow of turning." James i. 17. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Ps. xxiii. 11. And God himself expressly claims this character: "I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. iii. 6. "Declaring the end from

\* According to the scheme of our Anti-Calvinist brethren, there can be no absolute certainty of the future conversion of any individual of the human family; because, as they allege, an absolute certainty of such an event, founded upon a promise, determination, or decree of God, would be "partiality and arbitrary injustice;" and would "take away human liberty." And if this be true, the future conversion of the world is a merely probable event. On the contrary, according to the Calvinistic scheme, the greater part of the future inhabitants of the world, will be constrained by almighty grace to approach the gospel-feast. For when we consider the capacity of this globe to sustain twenty times its present population; the great increase of the human family during the millennial period; and the certainty that for the space of a thousand years, (some commentators say many thousand years,) all the people shall be made righteous; we may, on the Calvinistic scheme, readily conclude that the vast majority of the descendants of Adam, will at last be found the subjects of gratuitous election and salvation. And yet some have urged "that according to the Calvinists, very few will be saved, and all the rest must perish;" as though their own scheme held out more favourable hopes of the final happiness of the human species!



the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlv. 10. If we could suppose God to increase in knowledge, wisdom, power or goodness, it might be admitted that with every advance of this kind he might form a new purpose. But as he is ever the same, so his purposes are always the same. If he has ever formed any new design respecting the salvation of men, then he has not adhered to his first plan, and consequently has changed. But if he has always been of the same mind, then what he now does he must always have intended to do; and every sinner whom he now converts and saves, he must always have intended to save. And as in saving sinners he is influenced by his own spontaneous mercy, and not by any thing good in the creature, so his eternal design must have originated from the same source; and thus gratuitous election is evinced from the unchangeableness of the divine character.

4. The same doctrine may be argued from the divine *foreknowledge*.

It will be admitted by this audience, that God knows all things, past, present, and to come. To limit his knowledge in any degree, is to strip him of an essential perfection of Deity. To say that he *cannot* know all things, is to say that he cannot be God. To say that he *does not choose* to know all things, is to say that he does not choose to be God. But the Scriptures place this point beyond

dispute. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. It must be admitted, therefore, that God knew from eternity all that he would do in time. Suppose, then, that God in mercy converts a sinner to-day; he knew from eternity that he would do this, and he knew it with certainty. He did not know merely that he might *possibly* convert that sinner, but he knew with absolute certainty that he would. But how could he know this, unless his mind were fully made up as to what he would do? If his determination was at all unsettled, then the issue was doubtful, and if doubtful, it could not be certainly known. If men will only lay aside prejudice, and fairly look at this subject, they must believe the doctrine of election. For how in the name of reason could it be certainly known from all eternity that God would convert a sinner to-day, unless he had already come to a full determination to convert that sinner? For if his determination were not unalterably fixed, he could not know with absolute certainty that he would convert the sinner. And this is nothing less than the doctrine of election, which is thus placed beyond all doubt. And all the objections commonly urged against this doctrine, lie with equal force against that of the divine foreknowledge.

And hence you may learn why Calvinists are not willing to speak of God's decrees or purposes as *conditional*. Such language represents him as unsettled in his determina-

tions, through some deficiency of present knowledge, goodness, or power. It reduces him to the level of a creature, whose designs must be conditional because he cannot penetrate into futurity, and consequently, cannot determine positively upon the course he will hereafter pursue. But the knowledge, power, and goodness of God are infinite; and therefore he need not wait to see how his creatures will act, before he determines what he will do himself. Hence our Confession of Faith teaches, that "although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet he hath not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." Ch. 3, sec. 2.\*

\* Some Anti-Calvinists have adduced this passage as a proof that the Confession teaches the doctrine of predestination to death without regard to moral character; though it has not the slightest bearing upon that question. In order fully to enter into its meaning, it should be borne in mind that the Arminians supposed God to entertain at the same time several different and opposite determinations, suspended in uncertainty on as many different and opposite possible results. Thus, before the fall of man, he formed one purpose to send a Saviour, and another purpose not to send him, neither of which could be fully settled till he should wait and see whether man would stand or fall. So also, he formed one determination to save, and another to damn all mankind, both which being dependent on uncertain conditions, he could not make up his mind what he would do, till he should first see how his creatures would act. In opposition to this degrading view of the divine character, the Confession teaches that God is just as able to judge of the reasons which should influence his conduct, at one period as at another, so that his purposes are all as fully

And hence, also, you may perceive the propriety of that assertion, so often objected against our Confession of Faith, that the number of the elect “can neither be increased nor diminished.” Ch. 3, sec. 4. This passage has reference to the number of the elect, as comprehended by the infinite mind of Him to whom alone all things are present. The number of the redeemed is, to our limited minds, indefinite and uncertain; and may be increased above or diminished below our calculations. Of one thing we are certain, that the more fervent and importunate Christians are in their supplications, and the more faithful they are in the use of God’s appointed means, the greater will be the number of sinners converted and saved: because the connexion between the means and the end is just as much a subject of fore-ordination as any other thing. For the same reason, all the sinners so converted will be found at last among the subjects of eternal, gratuitous election. And still the number, as originally contemplated by the eye of infinite foreknowledge, and embraced

settled in eternity as in time, and not left suspended upon doubtful contingencies. At the same time, it represents him as having the best possible reasons for all his determinations, ordaining none to perdition, but for their own demerit. The passage above cited also rejects the singular notion, that God decreed things simply because he “foresaw them as future.” For example, that he decreed or purposed to create this world, because he foresaw that this world would be created! On the contrary, God foreknows his own acts, because he has decreed them.

in the scheme of redeeming mercy, will not have been increased or diminished. If this view of the subject seem liable to objection, that of our Anti-Calvinist brethren is still more so, as long as they retain the doctrine of the divine prescience. For, let them only admit that God knew from eternity the exact number that would at last be saved, and at once the question arises, Can that number be increased or diminished? If so, will it not follow, that God did not know the exact number? These are questions which cannot be answered satisfactorily on the Anti-Calvinist scheme. It is true that men of little capacities are heard to say, that they find no difficulties connected with the doctrine of foreknowledge. Not so the celebrated John Wesley. His penetrating mind discovered difficulties here, for which the Arminian system could furnish no remedy. In his letter to Dr. Robertson, dated Sept. 24th, 1753, and published in his miscellaneous works, he writes, "And if any one ask, how God's foreknowledge is consistent with our freedom, I plainly answer, I cannot tell."

And here we may as well notice that very common objection to the Calvinistic scheme, that "only a *certain number* will be saved." Of all the objections we have ever heard against that scheme, this appears to us the most silly. Because, view the subject any way you please, if any are finally saved, let the number be great or small, it must, to the all-comprehending mind, be a *certain number*.

Any other supposition would involve the denial of the divine foreknowledge. To wish things were otherwise is to wish that God would cease to be God! It is to wish the issue of the grand scheme of redemption were suspended in gloomy uncertainty! What, I ask, would be gained by having the number of the redeemed left undetermined, uncertain, and unknown? Where, I say, would be the advantage if God could be removed from the helm of the Universe, and his place occupied by men or angels? Would the number of the redeemed be increased? Is it that men so little confide in a God of infinite wisdom and benevolence, that they would take the eternal interests of the universe out of his hands, and commit them to blind creatures or to blinder chance?

We must now bring this discourse to a close. In our next we shall resume and finish the consideration of the objections against the election of grace.



# THE GREAT SUPPER.



## DISCOURSE THIRD.

“A certain man made a GREAT SUPPER and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.”—LUKE xiv. 16–24.

WE shall now, agreeably to promise, examine some remaining objections against the election of grace.

1. "If this doctrine be true, why should I use any *means* to secure my salvation?"

Because the decree of God instead of taking away, rather establishes the necessity and efficacy of the means. *Conf. of Faith*, ch. 3, sec. 1. God's determination to save Noah *by means of the ark*, only rendered the construction of the ark the more necessary to his preservation from the flood. God's determination to save Paul and his companions from shipwreck, *by the exertions of the seamen*, rendered the exertions of the seamen so necessary that none could be saved without them. Though "there stood by him an angel of God, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee;" yet, "as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, Paul said to the Centurion, and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Acts xxvii. 31. If God has purposed to favour you with a smiling harvest through his blessing upon your own industry, then you cannot expect a harvest unless you prepare the soil, and sow the seed. And if he has determined to save the souls of sinners through the means of his appointment, it is plain that none can expect salvation except in the use of those means.

On the principles of Anti-Calvinists, we cannot indeed discover much necessity for the use of means. For if God has already bestowed the enlightening and quickening influences of his Spirit upon all men, so that all

are sufficiently able to believe and become holy; their conversion being suspended upon the self-determination of their own wills, then we cannot see much need of preaching or praying; since men are to "act without being acted on." It is only because God has decreed the means in connexion with the salvation of men, that they are of the least utility or importance. It is hence that "faith cometh by hearing."

2. If election be true, how can God be sincere in offering salvation to all?

I answer: though the Master of the house constrained only a part to come to the feast, that did not prove him insincere in his invitation to the rest. He was not bound to compel all "to come in," as a proof of his sincerity in inviting all. No more is God under obligation to make all men willing to come to Christ, as an evidence of his sincerity in inviting all to come.

Notwithstanding his purpose of election, God is sincere in his invitation to all, because, in the *first* place, the provision is sufficient for all. In the *second* place, He is most willing that his invitation be accepted. In the *third* place, the invitation is made upon reasonable terms, there being nothing to hinder its acceptance but sin voluntarily indulged. And *lastly*, He never has, nor ever will cast out one who comes. What stronger proofs of sincerity could we require of any one?

But as our Anti-Calvinist friends often try to annoy us with this objection, let us see

what would be gained by adopting their system. Let them tell us, how God is sincere in making offers of salvation which he knows beforehand will never be accepted? Let them explain how, on their scheme, God can be sincere in the offer of eternal life to those whose damnation was foreknown to him, and therefore absolutely certain from eternity, and whose condemnation would only be increased by the offer? Is this what some of our brethren call “damning grace?”\*

The Cumberland Confession of Faith specifies a class of persons from whom God “withholdeth his grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts.” Ch. 5, sec. 4. And the Methodist General Conference, in their volume of *Doctrinal Tracts*, page 139, assert that “God predestinates or fore-appoints all disobedient unbelievers to damnation,” &c. Now we respectfully ask these brethren to show how, on their scheme, God is sincere in inviting those from whom he “withholdeth his grace,” and who were fore-appointed to damnation, before the foundation of the world. Here, were we disposed, we might loudly declaim about “mocking helpless creatures,” and “shedding crocodile’s tears.”† But we forbear. We will simply suggest to these brethren the propriety of mastering the difficulties in their own system before they concern themselves much about their neighbours.

\* Language used in a Methodist Tract.

† *Meth. Doct. Tracts*, pp. 169, 170.

Our Saviour's direction is, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

3. It is objected that the election of grace involves the doctrine of *eternal reprobation*, so that they who hold the one must also hold the other.

In order to meet this objection fairly, we must understand what our opponents mean by *eternal reprobation*, as charged by them against Calvinists. Our Cumberland brethren allege that "some," meaning the Presbyterians, "suppose it to be a sovereign determination of God to create millions of rational beings, and for his own glory, damn them eternally in hell, without regard to moral rectitude, or sin in the creature." *Cumb. Con. of Faith*. Ch. 3. *Note*. And the Methodist General Conference mean by it, "an eternal decree" by which "God hath predestinated to eternal damnation the far greater part of mankind, and that absolutely without any respect to their works." *Doct Tracts* pp. 95, 96. Now it must be clear to every intelligent mind that all this is quite remote from the doctrine of election, which represents God as simply resolving to bring in some to the feast of the gospel, while he leaves others under that condemnation which their refusal of mercy, and all their other sins have merited. It will, however, be said, "If predestination to life be not on account of foreseen goodness, predestination to death cannot be on account of fore-

seen wickedness." But this is by no means a correct inference. The master of the house constrained some to approach his feast without regard to any superior worthiness in them; and does it follow that in the exclusion of the others he had no respect to their unworthiness? Because the salvation of the believer is of free unmerited mercy, must the damnation of the unbeliever proceed from pure unmerited wrath? What a disposition there is to pervert the plainest matters! God beheld the whole human family in a state of sin and condemnation, all alike worthy of death, and equally unwilling to accept of mercy. And he resolved to rescue a part from perdition, and leave the rest to the consequences of their unbelief. Does this represent him as predestinating men to eternal death without regard to their character? If out of a number of State criminals some are pardoned by the Executive, does it follow that the rest are unjustly punished without respect to their works?

A popular argument of our opponents runs thus: "If God's electing some is the cause of their salvation, then his not electing others, and not their sin, is the cause of their damnation." Really, my friends, I am ashamed to notice reasonings which set common sense so completely at defiance. As well might you say, in reference to the persons in the parable, With some, their being "compelled to come in," was the cause of their admission to the feast: therefore with others, their not being



compelled, and not their contemptuous refusal, was the cause of their exclusion! As well might you argue that if the sun's shining upon some parts of the earth, is the cause of light and heat, then his not shining upon other parts, is the cause of darkness and frost; and therefore the sun is equally the source of darkness and light, of cold and heat! With quite as much propriety might our opponents say, that God's not operating every where, so as to prevent sin, is the universal cause of moral evil; and thus make the Holy One the author of all iniquity.

Since, then, the idea of eternal reprobation is not involved in the election of grace, we have a right to demand of our opponents, on what authority they charge that dogma upon Presbyterians. Can the *words* be found in our Confession of Faith? No such thing is pretended. Then are the *ideas* inculcated which our opponents attach to the words? Just the contrary. Why then accuse us of holding the doctrine? Why represent Presbyterians as teaching that God predestinated the far greater part of mankind to damnation without any respect to their works? Why hold up to the world several large and respectable denominations of Christians as "making the most holy God worse than the devil; more false, more cruel and more unjust?" Our opponents have never yet been able to produce from the public standards of those bodies a single line which by a fair and honest construction will countenance the

charge. The Lord shall judge betwixt us and those who thus seek to defame our character. It is easy to produce an overwhelming amount of testimony to show that the sentiment in question has been repudiated by the Calvinists of all ages. At present, as we are often charged with “softening down the asperities of Calvinism,” we will refer you to a few authorities.

In 1618, the Synod of Dort, representing the whole Calvinistic world, in reply to some calumnies, (the same now circulated against Calvinists,) say, that “this their declaration ought to suffice all lovers of peace, and men of moderate dispositions, viz., that God condemned no one, yea, neither had he decreed to condemn any one, unless justly for his own proper sins.” So again, in ch. 1, art. 15, speaking of the non-elect, they say, “Whom truly God decreed to leave in the common misery into which they had by their own fault cast themselves; and at length, not only on account of their *unbelief*, but also of all their *other sins*, to condemn and eternally punish them, to the manifestation of his own justice.”

Dr. Twisse, who was Chairman of the Assembly that composed our Confession of Faith, and must have understood its meaning quite as well as some modern Anti-Calvinists, says, “that his opinion is well known, that God doth not ordain any man to damnation, before the consideration of sin.” And again, “That God of his mere pleasure created all; but of his mere pleasure damneth none; but

every one that is damned, is damned for his sin, wilfully committed and contumaciously persisted in by them that come to riper years."

Dr. Thomas Ridgley, in his *Body of Divinity*, vol. 1, page 491, says, "Since God's permitting sin, or not hindering it, cannot be said to be the cause of its being committed, there being no cause thereof but the will of man; it follows from hence, that God's punishing sin, is not to be resolved into his permission of it as the cause thereof, but into the rebellion of man's will, as refusing to be subject to the divine law. And thus God considered men, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to condemn those whose desert of his punishment was foreseen by him from all eternity."

"Wickedness foreseen," says Dr. Scott, "is doubtless the cause of the Lord's purpose to condemn, because it is of man's self by nature; but holiness foreseen in a fallen creature, cannot be the cause of his election, because it is the effect of his special grace, and never comes from any other source." *Comm. on Rom. ix.*

We quote these passages to show what views of the subject have been entertained by Calvinists at different periods. If we turn to the Scriptures, we find Paul writing to the Thessalonians, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. And to the Romans thus: "Therefore hath he

mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Ch. ix. 18. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." Verse 22. "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Ch. i. 28. And Peter writes thus: "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also *they were appointed.*" 1 Pet. ii. 8. And Jude thus: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old *ordained to this condemnation.*" Jude 4. And the framers of our Confession, thinking it right to adhere closely to the language of the Bible, say, "The rest of mankind God was pleased according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice." Ch. 3, sec. 7.\* It is sufficiently

\* In the Methodist Doctrinal Tracts, page 8, the above passage is quoted as follows: "The rest of mankind God was pleased, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and ordain them to dishonour and wrath." In various places in these Tracts, an attempt is made to prove that according to the principles held by Calvinists, God predestinated men to damnation without any respect to their works. It was necessary therefore to leave out the words, "for their sin," and to omit other important members of the sentence, which, if fully quoted, would have defeated the

obvious, that any objection against this language lies with equal force against the authority of inspiration itself.

Some more bitter opponents, however, not willing to take our public Confession as a fair exposition of our faith, seek to support their atrocious accusations by the writings of *Calvin*. As though modern Presbyterians were responsible for the opinions of a man who lived three hundred years ago! How anxious are these brethren to convict us of some error, which may subject us to public odium! Is this the fruit of that charity and Christian affection which they so strongly profess on particular occasions? But, say they, as the Institutes of Calvin have been issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, therefore Presbyterians are bound to believe all that Calvin believed. Now let us hear what the Board say on this subject: They tell us in their Preface, that in introducing to the public a new edition of that work, "they do not wish to be regarded as adopting all the sentiments and forms of expression of the venerated writer," that "the doctrines embraced in the formularies of the Presbyterian Church are termed Calvinistic from their *general accordance* with Calvin's interpretation of scriptural truth. But that the admission of this term as explanatory of their general character, is not intended as by any means implying an entire co-in-

design. No wonder that many are deceived in regard to the sentiments of Calvinists.

cidence in the views of Calvin, or a submission to his authority as an umpire in theological controversies." The Board add, that "it must be acknowledged that some of the doctrines maintained in the Institutes have been more luminously set forth in modern times." And they specify among other things, Calvin's views of "the Sabbath," "imputed righteousness," and "reprobation," as what they are not willing to endorse. The truth is, that the Institutes are not used as a standard of doctrine by any Calvinistic body with which we are acquainted. They are not employed as a text-book in our theological Seminaries. And they are no more the standard of modern Calvinism, than the writings of Luther are the standard of modern Lutheranism. And though Calvin was confessedly the ablest of all the Reformers; though he did more than any other to give shape and consistency to the Reformation; though it is admitted by Mr. Wesley himself, that "he was a great instrument of God, and that he was a wise and pious man," yet it never was alleged that he was incapable of error. Nor can it be pretended that he was the founder of the modern Presbyterian Churches. On what grounds, then, do our opponents require us to endorse every part of his voluminous productions? With far greater propriety might we insist, that our Methodist brethren are bound to receive all the opinions of the Rev. John Wesley, because it is well known that he was their founder. And yet this dis-



tinguished man, in his letter to John Mason, dated Jan'y 13th, 1790, says, "As long as I live the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had such a custom. *We are no republicans, and never intend to be.* It would be better for those who are so minded to go quietly away." *Lond. Wesl. Mag. Ap. 1830.* Will Methodists hold themselves bound to endorse these sentiments?

After all, Calvin never believed that men were predestinated to damnation without respect to their works,—a sentiment of which his adversaries can convict him only by garbled and mutilated extracts from his writings. In his work on "Secret Providence" written in reply to the accusations of his enemies, he thus speaks, "The sum is; though man by nature was good, this rectitude, which was frail and fading, was not inconsistent with the divine predestination which doomed him to perish *for his own sin.*" p. 27. And again, addressing his calumniator, "The first article you take hold of is, that God, by a simple and pure act of his will, created the greatest part of the world for destruction. Now, all that about 'the greatest part of the world,' and 'the simple, pure act of the will of God,' is fictitious, and the product of the workshop of your malice. . . . This way of talking is no where to be met with in my writings, that the end of creation is eternal destruction. . . . Besides, though the will of God is to me the highest of

all reasons, yet I every where teach that where the reason of his counsels and his works does not appear, the reason is hid with him; so that he has always decreed justly and wisely. Therefore, I not only reject, I detest the trifling of the Schoolmen, about *absolute* power, because they separate his justice from his authority. . . . I, subjecting as I do the human race to the will of God, loudly declare that he decrees nothing without the best reason, which, if unknown to us now, shall be cleared up at last. You, thrusting forward your ‘simple and pure act of the will,’ impudently upbraid me with that which I openly reject in a hundred places or more.” pp. 17 and 18.\*

But as our Anti-Calvinist friends charge us with holding dangerous errors on this point, let us see whether they are more *orthodox* than others. The Cumberland Confession, as we have shown, teaches that “God, according to the counsel of his own will, fore-ordained to bring to pass,” “the damnation of the *reprobate*,” as an event “for his own glory.” chap. 33, sec. 2, compared with Catechism, Q. 7. It also speaks of some as “DOUBLY and ETERNALLY REPROBATED,” and likens them to “the chymist’s mineral, which *will not coin*

\* Calvin’s views of reprobation are discussed with much acuteness and learning by “Gotteschalck,” in his “Letters to Mr. Young;” and by the Rev. Wm. Annan, in his “Difficulties of Methodism.” The latter points out and exposes no less than fifteen or twenty perversions of Calvin’s language and meaning, by the author of the “Methodist Doctrinal Tracts.”

*into pure metal*, or the potter's clay, which *marred upon the wheel!*" ch. 3, *note*. And the "General Conference," in their Doctrinal Tracts, teach that God "according to his own foreknowledge from the foundation of the world . . . REFUSED, or REPROBATED all disobedient unbelievers, as such, to damnation." If it be said, that this awful sentence is founded upon fore-knowledge, I answer, that only gives absolute certainty to its execution; so that here is a class of men, known individually to God, against whom a decree of reprobation has gone forth, the execution of which is as certain as the divine foreknowledge can make it. This decree was in existence when they were born; and according to the mode of argument employed against Calvinists, they must have been "born to certain damnation;" nay, were "created to be damned,"—language of which some of our opponents appear extremely fond. Where, let me ask, is there any "possible salvation" for these "wretched reprobates," unless they can "cut their way to heaven through an eternal decree of God?" I need scarcely add, that on the Calvinistic scheme, none can be finally condemned, who are willing to be saved on the terms of the Gospel; since God's eternal decree insures a connexion between the means of salvation and eternal happiness.

4. Still it is urged, "that if God has 'ordained whatsoever comes to pass,' then the non-elect are compelled by the decree of God to commit those sins for which they are condemned, but of which God is the real author."

We answer, that those who make this objection, do not state the whole truth in the case. When the Presbyterian Confession says that "God hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass," it adds immediately, "*yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*" chap. 3, sec. 1.\* Here, you perceive, are three different, restricting clauses, which are essential to a correct understanding of the Calvinistic system. The *first* of these declares that God has "so" ordained all things as *not* to be the author of sin. His decrees do not extend to all things in the same manner; for the Confession elsewhere teaches that there are some things which God has decreed or purposed *to effect* by his own agency, and other things which he has decreed *to permit* or *suffer* to be done. The *second* restricting clause denies any such fore-ordination as would destroy man's free-agency, or make him a mere machine. "So as thereby . . . neither is violence offered to the will of the creatures." And the *third* asserts that God has "so" or-

\* The "General Conference," in their volume of Doctrinal Tracts, page 194, quote the above passage thus:—"God did from all eternity unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." The object in view is to show that according to the Calvinists, "God compels men to sin." Of course it would not do to quote the whole, as it stands in the Confession, as that would at once overthrow their main position.

dained all things as rather to establish than take away man's liberty, and the efficacy of means. "So as thereby . . . the liberty or contingency of second causes is not taken away, but rather established." It must be admitted by all who understand the English language, that those who receive the foregoing definition, are exempt from the charge of making God the author of sin, of denying man's freedom and accountability, and of setting aside the necessity and efficacy of means; in a word, they must be free from the charge of "Fatality."

But it is contended by our opponents, that one part of the definition is inconsistent with the other. For, say they, if God has ordained whatsoever comes to pass, he *must* be the author of sin; he *must* do violence to the will of the creatures; he *must* set aside the necessity of means. In this part of their argument, you perceive, every thing depends on the meaning attached to the word *ordain* or *fore-ordain*. If they be allowed to affix their own signification to terms, they may prove just what they please. Anti-Calvinists generally explain the words as denoting *fatality* or *physical necessity*. Calvinists deny that this is their true scriptural signification. For whatever may be said of fore-ordination when it extends to inanimate matter or irrational creatures; wherever intelligent or accountable beings are concerned, the idea of fatal necessity must be excluded. The Scriptures inform us that Jesus Christ "was verily *fore-ordained*, before the

foundation of the world." 1 Peter i. 20. Can this mean, that the Saviour's advent, sufferings and death, were decreed by fate? that violence was offered to his will, and to that of thousands of actors in the scenes of his life and death? or that the necessity of means in any instance was set aside? We think not. In the 4th verse of the Epistle of Jude, also, we read of certain men, who had crept in unawares, "who were before of old *ordained* to this condemnation." Does this imply that they were borne onward to condemnation by physical necessity? Calvinists do not so understand scriptural terms. *To fore-ordain* an event, is, properly, *to form such a purpose respecting it, as renders certain its future existence, through positive agency or permission*. Hence it is easy to show that the actions of an intelligent being may be fore-ordained, or rendered certain, without at all affecting his free agency. Suppose, for example, you knew with absolute certainty that the introduction of a Bible into a wicked family, would produce a reformation in the conduct of one of its members. And suppose that you knew with equal certainty that the reformation of that individual would call forth the bitter opposition of another member of the family. I say suppose you could know all this with absolute certainty. And perceiving that the good effected, would far surpass the evil, you determine to introduce a Bible into the family. In doing so you fore-ordain, or render certain the reformation of the individual.



You also fore-ordain, though not in the same sense, the wicked persecution which follows. And yet you are neither the author of the sin committed ; nor do you violate the will of any one ; nor do you set aside, but rather establish the necessity of the means, without which, none of these effects would have followed. We will not say that this illustration shows the precise manner in which God fore-ordains events ; but it sufficiently meets the case to answer our present purposes. It shows plainly enough, that it may be rendered certain that an intelligent free-agent will act in a given manner, that is to say, his actions may be pre-ordained, in full consistency with his freedom and accountability. The charge of discrepancy against the language of our Confession, therefore, falls to the ground.

As we have already stated, Calvinists do not regard the decrees of God as extending to all events in the same manner. Some things God has determined to *effect* by his own agency, and other things he has decreed to *permit* or *suffer* to be.\* And this distinction between a decree to *effect* and a decree to *permit*, has been adopted by Predestinarian divines in all ages. Augustine, about four hundred years

\* Drs. Bangs and Fisk seem not to understand the theological sense of these terms, as they speak of "a personal permit or *license* to sin." It is hardly necessary to say that no such ideas are implied in our use of the terms, which is in accordance with that declaration, "Who in times past *suffered* all nations to walk in their own ways." Acts xiv. 16.

after Christ, uses it, and asserts, "that the will of God is the highest and first cause of all things, because nothing happens without his command or *permission*." *De Trin.* lib. 3, ch. 4. Calvin quotes this passage with approbation, in his Institutes, B. 1, ch. 16, sec. 8; though he reasons against the idea of a *weak, idle* permission. Francis Turretin, his successor, uses the same distinction, and says, "The decree of God is not efficient in respect of evil, but *permissive* and directive." Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, defines a decree, as "a purpose to do, or *to permit* anything." Dr. Ridgley, on the same subject, observes, "Sin must be supposed to be committed by God's permission, and therefore is the consequence of his *decree to permit*, though not as other things, of his *decree to effect*." vol. 1, p. 424. "I adopt," says Dr. Dwight, "the second of these methods of explaining the introduction of sin into the world; and unite with those who assert that God *permitted* the existence of sin." *Theol.* vol. i. p. 255. Were it necessary we might add almost any amount of evidence of the same kind.

The Presbyterian Confession, as is well known, adopts this distinction. Speaking of the fall of our first parents, it says "This, their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy *counsel, to permit*, having purposed to order it to his own glory." ch. 6. sec. 1. Here we are told of a "counsel," and of a "purpose," according to which God *permitted* or *suffered* the existence of the first sin. In oth-

er words, he decreed to permit it. Again: "God *permitted* some of the angels wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation." Larg. Cat. Q. 19. And again: "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, do so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it [viz. his providence] extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a *bare* permission only, but such [*permission*] as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing them in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author, or approver of sin." ch. 5, sec. 4.\*

Nor are we alone in the use of this distinction. An eminent Methodist divine, the Rev. Richard Watson, says, "It is obvious that by

\* In the Methodist Doctrinal Tracts, p. 195, the above passage is quoted thus: "The almighty power of God extends itself to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men." It is adduced expressly to prove that according to the Calvinists, "sin necessarily comes to pass," by the "efficacious and irresistible will of God." Had the whole passage been produced, it would of course have refuted the charge. But it will be seen that even the fragment given is perverted. Not the *power* of God but his *providence* is said to extend to the first fall, &c. It appears from some remarks on page 193 of the Tracts, that the attention of the Book Committee had been called by some one to the unfairness of the citations. But instead of making any correction, they harshly and peremptorily re-assert their truth and fairness.

nothing can we fairly avoid this consequence, [making God the author of sin,] but by allowing the distinction between *determinations to do* on the part of God, and *determinations to permit* certain things to be done by others." *Theol.* vol. 2, p. 424. And again; "A decree *to permit*, involves no such consequences."

That distinguished Lutheran divine, the Rev. Dr. S. S. Schmucker, observes, that "the agency of God in regard to all things in the universe is thus of a twofold nature, either that of *efficient causation* or of *permission*; and his decrees or intentions contemplating it, must necessarily correspond to the acts." *Theol.* p. 87, *2nd Edit.* And again: "It appears obvious that God, as an infinitely perfect being must have a definite purpose, or intention in regard to all the actions which he himself will or will not perform,—and also in regard to all the actions of his rational creatures, whether he will or will not permit them. But the actions of God and those of his creatures, embrace all the phenomena which occur in the universe; therefore it follows that *the purposes or intentions of God, either causative or permissive, do extend to all things.*" p. 95. So writes Professor Schmucker, and he would scarcely have said more, had he asserted that, God had fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

And now, my hearers, in view of what has been said, let me appeal to you to say whether it is fair, whether it is honest, to charge Calvinists with the belief "that God compels men

to sin by his decree." Is it not evidently a gross unfounded calumny, such as in most other cases would subject the authors to a loss of reputation? And yet look at the following representation of our sentiments, in a treatise by Dr. W. Fisk, published by authority of the "General Conference." Speaking of "all the Calvinistic divines of Europe and America," the author says, "They must believe that God determined to create men and angels for the express purpose to damn them eternally; and that he determined to introduce sin, and influence men to commit sin, and harden them in it, that they might be fit subjects of his wrath;" and "that for doing as they were impelled to do by the irresistible decree of Jehovah, they must lie down forever under the scalding vials of his vengeance in the pit of hell." *Disc. on Pred.* pp. 26—7. Precisely the same scandalous imputations are, by many Cumberland Presbyterians, incessantly propagated from both the pulpit and the press. Nor is the ferocious warfare against Calvinists confined to a particular country. Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, writes that he had seen a Lutheran Catechism, published in Europe, in which the question is asked, "Dost thou believe then fully that the Calvinists in the place of the living and true God, honour and adore the Devil?" Answer: "I believe it from the bottom of my heart." *Luth. and Calv.* p. 45.\* We are aware that

\* In the Methodist Doctrinal Tracts, p. 172, is an address to Satan, which we have no hesitation in saying,

it is not a new thing that men should vilify those called Calvinists, and “say all manner of evil against them falsely,” but it would be difficult to invent more gross and iniquitous misrepresentations than these. They are only equalled by the false testimony borne against Christ and his apostles. And yet there are times when those who thus asperse our character, invite and even urge us to unite with them in the communion of the body and blood of Christ!

Still it is urged that all these blasphemous consequences flow directly from the doctrine of *absolute decrees*. I reply that no such language as “absolute decrees,” is to be found in any part of our public standards; and if the word *absolute* is to be taken in the sense of our opponents, to signify *despotic, arbitrary, or compulsory*, we deny that such decrees are recognized or advocated by Calvinists. Our opponents too often put language into our mouths, then affix their own meaning to it, and then draw such inferences as suit themselves. If by “absolute decrees” be meant divine purposes not founded upon uncertain events in futurity,—purposes not based, like

is fraught with the most concentrated blasphemy ever proceeding from the tongue or pen of mortal, whether Jew, Pagan, or Infidel,—and all imputed to the Calvinists. One cannot help wondering how such transcendent impieties ever found their way into the mind of man. I am not willing to transfer the language to these pages; but the work itself is doubtless accessible to most readers, having been sown broad-cast over the land.



those of weak short-sighted mortals, upon doubtful *conditions*, then indeed we believe in absolute decrees. We doubt not that the mind of God has always been fully made up as to what it would be proper for him to do at every period of time. But how the most absolute decree to permit or suffer men to sin and perish by their own fault, can be tortured into a *compulsory* decree, we are at a loss to comprehend.

Will our Anti-Calvinist brethren deny that God actually leaves any one to perish in their sins? Will they affirm that He does all in his power to prevent the sin and damnation of men, but is unsuccessful? \* Then let them tell us, Why did He create men with the certain knowledge that he would not be able to hinder their eternal perdition? I say, let our brethren fully explain, why He ushered those "wretched beings" into existence, and suffered them to grow up to manhood, with the absolute certainty that they would "lie down forever under the scalding vials of his vengeance in the pit of hell." Here at last our opponents are struck dumb; while the Calvinist is enabled to rejoice in the wise and benevolent control of him, who though his ways are unsearchable, will neither do, nor permit anything which will not finally redound to his praise and to the supreme good of the intelligent Universe.

\* "To say the power of God was adequate to have prevented man as a free agent from sinning, is a contradiction in terms." *Bangs's Reply to Haskel*, p. 24.

But some will say, "Why after all, do Calvinists use such strong language as *purpose*, *decree*, *fore-ordain*, with reference to permission?" I answer, for three reasons. FIRST, because they wish strongly to repudiate the notion of a *bare, idle* permission. They cannot believe that God permits the sinful acts of his creatures through weakness, negligence, or indifference. On the contrary he permits those acts with a fixed intention to order them to his own glory. Hence we doubt not that a decree *to permit*, is as much an act of the divine mind as a decree *to effect*. In the SECOND place Calvinists use this mode of expression chiefly because the Scriptures employ language equally strong, in reference to the same subject. David, when assailed by Shimei with opprobrious words, said "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord *hath bidden him*." 2 Sam. xvi. 11. When Job's children and servants were slain, and his property carried off by robbers, he said "The Lord *hath taken away*." Job i. 21. When Hushai deceived the court of Absalom by treacherous counsel, it was because the "Lord *had appointed* [i. e. fore-ordained] to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." 2 Sam. xvii. 14. And God himself says to the king of Assyria, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. *I will send* him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the

prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit *he meaneth not so*, neither doth his heart think so ; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few :” Isa. x. 5, 7. When Jesus was wickedly put to death, it was declared, “ Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever God’s hand and *his counsel determined before to be done* :” Acts iv. 27, 28. Our Anti-Calvinist friends say, this is rather strong language ; but we think it is not too strong. Once more : When Joseph’s brethren had sold him to go into Egypt, he said to them, “ God did send me before you to save life.” And again : “ Ye thought evil against me, but God *meant it* unto good :” Gen. i. 20. Anti-Calvinists will tell us that God did not *mean* it at all ; but the Bible says he did. That very event, which Joseph’s brethren meant for evil, God meant, purposed, or decreed to permit for good.

In the THIRD place, Calvinists adopt this strong language in reference to the permission of sin, because a decree *to permit* renders the future existence of an event as certain as a decree *to effect*. Wicked men will be sure to act according to their character, unless prevented. Hence the decree or purpose to permit the brethren of Joseph to act out the wickedness of their hearts at a particular juncture, rendered it certain that they would sell him to the Ishmaelites to go down to Egypt. And God’s decree to permit the Jews at a particu-

lar time to do with Christ what they had all along desired to do, rendered it certain that they would put him to death at that precise time. These, we think, are good reasons why we should speak of an event which God has determined to permit, as *fore-ordained*.

Before we leave this subject, it will not be amiss to notice the view of it presented by our Cumberland brethren, in their Confession of Faith. This is the more necessary because they are sometimes clamorous in their opposition to our Confession, of which they profess to esteem their own a decided *improvement*. Under the head of "DECREES OF GOD," ch. 3, sec. 1, they declare that "God did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, determine to act, or bring to pass, what should be for his own glory." You will observe that they do not say simply, that God fore-ordained *to do or to permit*, what should be for his own glory, but that he determined, or decreed "to bring to pass" every such event. Bearing this in mind, let us turn to ch. 6, sec. 1, where, speaking of the fall of our first parents, they say, "This their sin God was pleased, *according to his wise and holy counsel*, to overrule, through Christ, *for his own glory*, and the good of all them that believe." And, chap. 2, sec. 1, adds, that God is most "absolute, working *all things* according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, *for his own glory*." From these passages taken together it necessarily follows, that God in his "holy counsel," contemplated the sin and fall

of Adam, and all other events, as things which *should be* for his own glory. And having decreed or determined to bring all such events to pass, he therefore determined to bring to pass, the sin and fall of the first pair, together with all other things, as they exist ! Now this is passing beyond the confines of the most rigid Calvinism. God permits or suffers many things to take place, which it would be impious to say were brought to pass by his own agency. It does not relieve the difficulty that the Cumberland Catechism, Q. 7, admits that “sin, not being for God’s glory, therefore he hath not decreed it.” For their Confession clearly asserts that the first sin of man and all other things do contribute to God’s glory. We have no desire to impute to these brethren any sentiment which they do not really approve. But we would venture to suggest that it would be wisdom on their part, to alter their Confession ; or, no longer require their ministers and members “sincerely to receive and adopt” it ; or, for consistency’s sake, cease to charge the Presbyterian Confession as teaching fatality, or as making God the author of sin.

Having occupied more time than we had intended with the last mentioned objection, we hasten to consider another, viz :

- 5. That the election of grace is a *discouraging* doctrine.

*Answer.*—As long as it is true, that unless the master of the house determine to constrain men to approach the gospel-feast, and carry

his determinations into effect, they will never come at all—I cannot see how the fact that he does constrain a part to come, should prove discouraging. But whom does it discourage? Faithful ministers? All their hopes of success are derived from God's gracious determination to save. Was it discouraging to the Apostle Paul, when labouring in the idolatrous city of Corinth, to hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I have much people in this city?" Acts xviii. 9, 10. Or, was it discouraging to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in prospect of labouring among the heathen, to be assured from the testimony of the inspired Simeon, that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out of them* [i. e. to elect] a people for his name?" Acts xv. 14. No, my hearers, ministers would all be in despair without the doctrine. Who then are discouraged? Praying Christians? Without the assurance of God's unchanging purpose to save, they could not have the heart to open their mouths in supplication. Were it believed that the sinner's salvation was suspended upon the self-determination of his own heart, the lips of prayer would be sealed in everlasting silence. Whom, then, I ask, does this doctrine discourage? The anxious sinner? It is on this support he relies, when every other has failed. He casts himself at the footstool of sovereign mercy, crying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." No, my hearers, the doctrine of election discourages none but



the careless, the presumptuous, or the self-righteous, who are building upon a foundation of sand.

Having thus endeavoured to explain and vindicate the electing love of God, I shall now invite your attention to another doctrine, closely connected with it, and illustrated with equal clearness in the text—I mean *effectual calling*. Election, or predestination to life is that eternal purpose of God whereby he resolved to save a portion of our rebellious race by bringing them to acquiesce in the terms of the gospel. Effectual calling is simply the carrying of this determination into effect in time; as Paul says, “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called.” In the parable the master of the house, after his first invitation was rejected, issued another, which he determined to accompany with such means as would be effectual in furnishing his table with guests. This was effectual calling. Our Anti-Calvinist brethren contend that all men are called alike; and that there is no ground for the distinction between a *general* or *common*, and a *special*, or *effectual* call. “To the law and the testimony,” then. Do the Scriptures justify this distinction?

When our Saviour says, “Many be called, but few chosen,” (Matt. xx. 16,) it is manifest that he refers to that general call, which is common to those who hear the gospel; a call which is disregarded by many to the very last. But when Paul says, “Whom he *called*, them he also justified,” (Rom. viii. 30,)

we do not understand him as asserting that all those who are favoured with the ordinary calls of the gospel are justified. He evidently speaks of such as are effectually or savingly called. The same apostle writes to the Corinthians; "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called.*" 1 Cor. i. 26. Here he cannot mean simply that not many of those higher orders of society are favoured with the common means of grace. He again has reference to a special call. In another place also, he characterizes a class of persons as "*called according to the purpose*" of God; and he affirms of them that "all things shall work together for their good." Rom. viii. 28. But this surely cannot be said of any who are not savingly, or effectually called. We have already said enough to show that the distinction is clearly recognized in the Bible. Indeed, our opponents themselves, the moment they bow before the Lord in prayer, admit the doctrine of effectual calling in its fullest extent. You must all have noticed the striking fact, that when Anti-Calvinist preachers have proclaimed the calls of the gospel, they conclude the services with prayer to God that he would send down his Spirit and bless the truth to the conversion of their hearers. And what is this, but asking God to make the call effectual? Their prayer is in substance as follows: "Lord, these sinners have now heard the external call; but it depends on thee alone whether it be effectual or not. We beseech,

thee, therefore, *effectually* to call them by thy good Spirit, or they will never come to Christ." Such is the evident meaning of the petitions they offer in behalf of their hearers. They all involve the doctrines of special grace and effectual calling; and a prayer which would contain a denial of these doctrines would be such a one as has scarcely ever proceeded from the mouth of man. Indeed, if it be true that God has called all men alike, and that it depends on themselves whether the call prove effectual, there is no propriety in offering a single petition to God in their behalf. And the Calvinist thinks he possesses at least this advantage, that he has embraced a system of doctrine he is not obliged to renounce, every time he approaches a throne of grace.

The objection is sometimes heard against the doctrine of effectual grace, that it represents the sinner as literally *compelled* to come to Christ. But it is a point in which we are all agreed, that God in no instance offers "violence to the will of the creature." The simple question between us and our opponents is, whether God is able to employ means effectually to bring a sinner to Christ, without destroying his natural freedom. In other words, whether God is able to make a sinner *willing* to come to Christ. And one would suppose that the slightest reference to the Scriptures would place this question beyond debate. "All that the Father giveth me," says Christ, "shall come to me." John vi. 37. Surely he

that could say they *shall come*, can make them willing to come. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Rom. viii. 30. "A new heart," says the Lord, "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "For the love of Christ *constraineth* us." 2 Cor. v. 14. On this subject, perhaps no one has expressed the truth more clearly than the great Luther. In his book, *De Servo Arbitrio*, he says, "When the Holy Spirit is pleased to change the will of a bad man, the new man still acts voluntarily. He is not compelled by the Spirit to determine contrary to his will, but the will itself is changed. And he cannot now do otherwise than love the good, as before he loved evil." The Cumberland Confession, also, under the head of "Effectual Calling," tells us that God accomplishes that work of grace in the souls of men, by "taking away their heart of stone, and giving them an heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by his almighty power *determining them* to that which is good, and *effectually drawing* them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being *made willing by his grace*." Ch. 10, sec. 1. And this is just as good Calvinism as if it were read from the Presbyterian Confession.

The Rev. John Wesley, when in the fortieth year of his age, uttered the following remarkable testimony on this subject,—“With regard to the second, *irresistible grace*, I believe,

that the grace which brings faith, and thereby salvation into the soul, is irresistible at that moment: That most believers may remember some time when God did irresistibly convince them of sin: That most believers do at some other times, find God irresistibly acting upon their souls." *Wesley's Works*, vol. iii. p. 289. Here Mr. Wesley had well nigh run into an extreme on the Calvinistic side. Modern Calvinists do not usually speak of the grace which produces conversion as *irresistible*, because in fact the sinner does make more or less resistance. For this reason they prefer calling it *effectual*, *triumphant*, or *victorious* grace. It is grace which brings the sinner to Christ, overcoming all the resistance it meets with. Our opponents, indeed, sometimes contend that sinners may and often do make such resistance to divine grace, that the Holy Spirit is not able to effect their conversion by any exertion of power compatible with their free moral agency. But it is observable that they always seem to abandon this opinion as soon as they approach the throne of grace. There they do not tell the Lord that He is unable to convert sinners; but their language is, "Lord, if thou *wilt*, thou *canst* make them clean." Indeed, if sinners were beyond the reach of almighty grace, prayer in their behalf would be a useless unmeaning mockery.

But how, it will be asked, can the Lord effectually call sinners, if they choose to resist? It is well to throw in an *if*. For when God

undertakes to convert sinners, he knows how to exercise such a control over their affections that they *shall not choose* to resist. "Thy people," says he to the Messiah, "shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps. cx. 3. "*I drew them* with cords of a man, with *bands of love.*" Hos. xi. 4. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I *drawn thee.*" Jer. xxxi. 3.

On the subject of the will, and the influence of grace, Anti-Calvinists have advanced two different theories. Of these the first supposes that all men have received an equal measure of grace at their birth. This natural or native grace is all that is needed for their conversion, since it sufficiently counteracts the influence of native depravity, and leaves the will free to incline itself to holiness by its own inherent power. Thus the Creator is freed from the imputation of partiality, to which, it is alleged, he would be liable, should he bestow a larger supply of grace upon some than upon others.

To all this it has been objected that men differ exceedingly in their education, habits and situation in life, some being exposed to much greater temptations than others; and that, consequently an equal measure of grace bestowed on each individual would be followed by results prodigiously unequal. What might be sufficient to keep the will of one sinner in the desired state of equilibrium, till



in some lucky moment he may choose holiness, would leave the will of another still powerfully biased toward evil. Thus the theory of equal grace ends in discriminating grace—the very thing its advocates wish to avoid.

To obviate this difficulty some Anti-Calvinists have proposed another theory, according to which grace is bestowed upon men *in different measures*, each individual receiving an amount exactly proportioned to the strength of the obstacles in the way of his conversion, whether they arise from native depravity, from education, or habit, or from the force of peculiar temptations. Thus the will in all cases is kept pretty evenly poised between sin and holiness, and quite free from any controlling bias. And if one sinner is converted rather than another, the difference is not owing to any increased supply of grace, but to the self-determination of his own will.\*

\* "To me it is manifest," says the Cumberland Presbyterian oracle, "that the Spirit's call is not effectual in the case of one, because an increased measure of grace is given." *Bird's Error Unmasked*, p. 92. Far more respectable authority decides, that "no immediate action of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, or will, is either necessary or promised in Scripture, to enable any one to believe the word externally propounded to him." *Episcopiæ, Disp. priv.* Says another, "We can convert ourselves or not." *Corvinus ad Bog.* fol. 263. "Divine Providence," says Arminius, "never determines the free will to either of two opposite things." *Artic. Perpen.* And the whole body of Remonstrants, strenuously maintained, that "The efficacy of Christ's merits depends so entirely upon ourselves, that we can

On this theory we remark,

1. That it has not a particle of support in the Scriptures. It is mere theory, invented to uphold a system.

2. According to this theory, the greater the sinner, the greater is the grace given, in order to counteract his depravity. Hence Simon Magus had more grace than Peter, and Judas more than either!!

3. If this theory be true, sinners are regenerated by their own wills, which, by the self-determining power, incline themselves to the side of holiness. Whereas the Bible says of believers, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of the will of man*, but of God." John i. 13. And Paul says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom. ix. 16.

4. According to this theory, man worketh in himself "to will." But Paul says, "It is God which worketh in you both *to will* and to do, of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13.

5. If this theory be correct, the redeemed in heaven are under no more obligation to the grace of God than the damned in hell. They made themselves "to differ" from others; and while, therefore, they give some glory to God for their salvation, they may ascribe much more to their self-determining wills.

make our own calling effectual, or ineffectual." *Remonstr. Apol.* p. 93. Of course, on these principles, prayer for unconverted sinners is an idle waste of breath.

6. This theory utterly precludes the necessity, and even the propriety, of praying for impenitent sinners. For if their conversion ultimately hinges upon their own wills, who does not see that our prayers should be addressed, not to God, but to the sinners themselves?

Having now, in pursuance of our original design, discoursed at some length on the principal points embraced in our doctrinal system, we deem it necessary here to notice an objection often urged against that system, namely that it is *demoralizing in its tendency*.

To this we answer: that we are willing and desirous that the system should be tested by its fruits; and we appeal to impartial judges to say, what has been its uniform practical influence. Only select those portions of Europe and America, where Calvinism has been the only, or the prevailing creed, and inquire what has been the character of the great body of the people. The unanimous verdict of historians and travellers is that they have always been distinguished from the surrounding population by a purer and more elevated morality. Take for a sample the city where Calvin taught, and where the influence of his doctrine must have been most deeply felt; and let the testimony of the celebrated D'Aubigné be heard. "Calvin," says he, "with the zeal of a prophet, and the devotion of a martyr, who submits himself unreservedly to the stern word of God, exacted from the Church under his care an absolute obedience. He strove

hand to hand with the libertine party, and by the grace of God he remained the stronger. Geneva, formerly so corrupted, was regenerated, and displayed a purity of manners, a Christian simplicity, which drew from Farel, after an absence of fifteen years, a shout of admiration, and these remarkable words: ‘I would rather wish to be the last in Geneva than the first any where else.’ And fifty years after Calvin’s death” adds D’Aubigné “Jean Valentin Andreae, a fervent Lutheran, having passed some time within our walls, said on his return: ‘What I have seen there I shall never forget, and I shall ardently desire to retain it all my life. The fairest ornament of that republic is its tribunal of manners, which makes inquiry every week into the disorders among the citizens. Games of cards and chance, oaths, blasphemies, impurity, quarrels, hatreds, deceits, infidelities, drunkenness and other vices are suppressed. Oh! but this purity is a beautiful ornament of Christianity! We (the Lutherans,) cannot shed tears enough over that in which we are awanting. If the difference of doctrine did not withdraw me from Geneva, the harmony of its manners would have retained me there forever.’”—*D’Aubigné’s Luth. & Calv.* pp. 54, 55.

“Will it not be granted by every intelligent reader,” says Dr. Miller, “that during the first half century after the Reformation was established in England, when nineteen twentieths of the Protestant clergy in that kingdom

were avowed Calvinists, the state both of piety and of morals was unspeakably better than during the latter half of the seventeenth century, when Arminianism had, among the majority, taken its place? What was the character of the two thousand 'ejected ministers,' in the reign of Charles II. who were almost to a man Calvinists? Were they not, characteristically as a body, the most pious, pure, diligent and exemplary servants of God that England ever saw? Is it not universally admitted, that the state of piety and of morals has ever been far more pure in Scotland than in England, and pre-eminently in those districts and congregations in Scotland, in which Calvinism has maintained a steady reign? And can any part of the world be named, in which, for nearly a hundred years after its settlement, purer morals reigned, than in New England, in which, as every one knows, during the greater part of that period a Calvinistic creed almost universally prevailed?"

"From the earliest morning of liberty," says the organ of the Campbellite Baptists, at Pittsburgh; "from the earliest morning of liberty, when the pilgrim fathers first set foot on Plymouth rock, and contested it with the wild beasts, and the wild men of the forest, down to the noon tide heat and burden of the Revolutionary day, and thence to these times, Presbyterians have sought out and wrought out the weal and the wealth, the peace and prosperity of this great and growing republic."

The Rev. Dr. Charles Elliot, editor of the "Western (Methodist,) Christian Advocate," testifies as follows: "The Presbyterians of every class were prominent, and even foremost in achieving the liberties of the United States. They have been all along the leading supporters of constitution and law, and good order. They have been the pioneers of learning and sound knowledge from the highest to the lowest grade, and are now its principal supporters. The cause of morals and good order have always found them the first to aid, and among the last to retire from its support."

On this subject, also, the British Encyclopedia, a work not friendly to Calvinism, makes a remarkable concession. At the close of a long article on Predestination, the writers say,—"There is one remark which we feel ourselves bound in justice to make, although it appears to us somewhat singular. It is this,—that from the earliest ages down to our own days, if we consider the character of the ancient Stoics, the Jewish Essenes, the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, when compared with that of their antagonists, the Epicureans, the Sadducees, the Arminians and the Jesuits, we shall find that they have excelled, in no small degree, in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; and have been the highest honour to their own ages, and the best models for imitation to every age succeeding."

Still there are those who insist that the Calvinistic doctrine *does harm*. But how is it



that it does this harm ? Only as misrepresented and distorted by its enemies. And this is not our fault, nor the fault of the doctrine. We endeavour to dispense the truth of God just as we find it in the sacred volume. Certain designing party men, in order to render it odious, mix with it soul-destroying error. We hand out what we believe to be the pure water of life from the divine fountain; they add to it the poison of death and then pass it round as our mixture. If, therefore, harm is done, we cannot be held accountable. The whole responsibility, and it is a fearful one, rests upon those misguided men who, for party purposes, give currency to their own wicked perversions of our system. It is the poison they infuse into the cup which does all the mischief.

Thus we have endeavoured, in continuation, to illustrate and defend some of the principal doctrines of the Reformation as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Some of you may feel surprise that a system of doctrine so clearly supported by Scripture, and bearing such heavenly fruits, should be so much vilified in our age and country : and that its friends should be peculiar objects of hatred and persecution. We believe, indeed, that we have much reason to complain of injustice. But we are not disposed to cast indiscriminate censure upon the great body of any religious denomination. Among Anti-Calvinists, we are happy to say, are multitudes of persons, both clergymen and laymen, whose piety and

zeal are worthy of universal esteem, and who, if left to the impulse of their own feelings, would prefer to live in peace and friendship with all who love the Saviour. But unhappily they retain in their connexion no inconsiderable number of persons, both preachers and private members, who are "spots in their feasts of charity." These persons make it their chief business to proselyte from other bodies, and leave no means untried to gain their object. They conceive it to be the interest of their party to cry down the ministers and the doctrines of other denominations and render them odious in the eyes of the community. Against the Calvinistic churches, especially, they employ all the petty artifices which the most practised sectarian cunning can devise. Finding it impossible, after repeated trials, to overthrow our doctrines by argument, they descend to a course of misrepresentation and slander, at variance with every principle of honesty, and even of common decency. They proclaim from the pulpit, from the press, and from house to house, that Calvinists believe and teach a system of fatality;—that men are not free-agents but mere machines destitute of both power and will;—that God is the author of all sin; that He has predestinated the greatest part of mankind to destruction without any respect to their works, and compels them to sin by his decree, that he may have a pretext for their damnation;—that those who are elected must be saved do what they may, while the rest must be damned do what they will;

—that there are infants in hell not a span long. All this they assert and re-assert with confidence, in direct contradiction to our public standards, and in opposition to all that Calvinists have spoken or written on these subjects.

Such is the *moral practice* of the men who are so much in fear of the demoralizing influence of Calvinism! May I then ask, Are these the *good works* of which they claim to be the exclusive advocates?—these the evidences on which they build their confident assurance of salvation? Have they never learned that solemn command of Jehovah, “THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR?” Or do they not consider Calvinists as “neighbours?”

If at any time we undertake to refute the aspersions of these sectarian proselyters, by exhibiting our real views of divine truth, they discover the utmost alarm lest the people should be undeceived with regard to our sentiments. Instantly a sort of *secret police* is set to work, and reports are spread far and near, that we have perpetrated some daring outrage against the peace of Christian society. Now they feel that their “craft is in danger.” Now they resort to new artifices to sustain their credit. They assert that we have covered up the offensive features of Calvinism;” and contradicted our own professed belief. What proof do they bring to support this charge? None, but their own empty assertion. And have they carefully examined the subject? No. Have they read? No. Have they

As the class of men of whom we speak belong to different religious bodies, they are often engaged in angry disputes and bitter contentions among themselves. Yet they can, on occasion, smother their resentments and unite their different and jarring interests, to enter upon a crusade against Calvinists. Then it is seen that Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, Sadducees and Pharisees, however alienated, readily become friends for the sake of persecuting the doctrines of Christ.

When these men appear in the pulpit, it is counted a wonder if they can finish a discourse without some violent thrusts at the Calvinists. If one of them is introduced into your family, he will at once make an effort to cloak his bigotry with strong professions of *charity*. He will lament with apparent feeling the dissensions among professors of the Gospel, and as long as there is any hope of bringing you over to his party, he will fairly overwhelm you with his flatteries and expressions of kind regard. If he succeeds in making you his proselyte, he will discover very little anxiety whether you are a child of God or a child of the devil, so that you are secured as a member of his church. But if anything occur to disappoint his expectations respecting you, his conduct will be instantly changed, and he will display much more of the temper of the wolf than of the lamb.

While I make these severe remarks I am quite willing to exempt the great majority of the members of the religious denominations

from most of the censure implied in them. Doubtless great numbers of well-meaning persons in connexion with these bodies are grievously misled in regard to our doctrines by books and tracts, and by artful partisan leaders. But if they could be prevailed on to discountenance those designing demagogues, the different churches might live together in comparative peace and harmony. And then, though there might not be so many loud *professions* of charity as are now heard, there would be much more of the *reality*. Then, though there might not be quite so much loving "in word and in tongue," there would be much more of it "in deed and in truth."

We shall conclude with a few remarks.

1. We may learn from the views which have been presented in these discourses, why it is that the doctrines of grace are so generally and so violently opposed. There are some doubtless, whose hostility is ascribable to mistaken views of these doctrines. They have heard from their religious teachers so many distorted and shocking representations of them, that their prejudices have become firmly set against every thing that bears their name. Yet they recognize them in their prayers, and embrace them substantially as matters of experience. They will admit that if the Lord has made them to differ from others, it was not owing to any superior goodness foreseen in them, but to his own spontaneous mercy ;—that they never would have chosen God, if he had not first chosen them ; and that had they been left to the self-determination of their own hearts, they

thought? No. How then do they arrive at their conclusion? O they are such giants in intellect, that without reading, conversation or reflection, they can decide peremptorily upon matters which require more study, learning and knowledge, than most men can even comprehend. It is in vain that we on our part, point them to the Confession of Faith; in vain do we quote a multitude of writers, in evidence that we have given a faithful exhibition of our doctrines. They are not to be satisfied with evidence. For the thousandth time they will repeat their hackneyed perversions of Calvinism, while they raise a hue and cry, "that Calvinists preach what they do not believe." Thus these persecuting bigots seek to stab the character of ministers of Christ. But what do *they* know of our belief, who can scarcely tell what they believe themselves? And how can they be qualified to explain our creed, when it is too evident that they are not competent to give an intelligent account of their own? \*

\* To guard against misrepresentation, the writer repeats that he is not speaking of the great body of any Christian denomination, but of a class of individuals, too numerous, alas, in several religious societies in our country. That there is such a class of persons as he describes, no person of ordinary observation will deny. It has of late become somewhat customary with preachers of this class, where their history is not known, to boast that they once belonged to a Presbyterian church, and consequently *know* what horrible doctrines are believed and taught by the Calvinists. Of these individuals, however, some will be found, on inquiry, to have incurred the censure of the church and have withdrawn from it on that account. Others have aspired to be pub-



My hearers, can you suppose these religious demagogues really believe their own statements in reference to Calvinists? Have they even a suspicion that we entertain the sentiments they so often charge upon us from the pulpit and the press? Only witness their conduct whenever they preside at the administration of the Lord's Supper. Will they then invite Calvinists to take their places among the friends and followers of the Saviour? O yes: and if party interest dictates, they can excel all others in loud professions of *charity*, and can mingle with their invitations the warmest expressions of cordial fellowship and Christian affection! But would they,—could they do this if they were sincere in their representations of our doctrinal views? No: if they believed half of the shameful imputations they cast upon us, they would as soon invite infidels or atheists to their communion. They know that they could not, without the most glaring treachery to the Head of the Church, hold Christian fellowship with persons maintaining what they habitually charge upon the Calvinistic churches. And thus their slanderous imputations are contradicted and refuted by a better evidence than words,—the testimony of their own conduct.

lic teachers, but owing to their deficiency in prudence, piety or talents, met with no encouragement in the Presbyterian Church, or they have refused to qualify themselves for so important an office by a reasonable course of study, and have entered another denomination with a view to shorten their road to the ministry.

would never have come to the gospel-feast. They will even confess that if God had long since "passed them by" in the open field of their rebellion, and left them to perish in unbelief, it would have been no more than their sins had deserved. Now this is the very sum and substance of Calvinism. But there are others whose opposition arises from quite a different source. They understand these doctrines sufficiently well to perceive the bearing they have upon their self-righteous hopes. The idea that they possess nothing which they did not receive,—nothing on account of which they may glory over their fellow creatures;—that they were so desperately wicked as to need the constraining influence of the Divine Spirit to bring them to Christ;—that they might have been as justly passed by as the worst of the race;—that for every part of salvation they must be indebted wholly to the free and sovereign mercy of God;—this gives the death blow to all their fancied self-sufficiency, pride, and self-righteousness. Wicked men sometimes oppose them because they are not willing that God should reign. They do not like the government of a holy God. They cannot brook the idea that the interests of eternity should be in his hands, and they are angry at the suggestion that he should "work all things after the counsel of his own will." They wish to live undisturbed in their sins, and yet have their salvation always in their own hands. The idea that God may justly leave them to perish in their iniquity;—the thought that if they are ever saved, it will be by the interpo-

sition of free sovereign grace, confounds their delusive hopes and allows them no peace till they are reconciled to God. We believe it is for such reasons that these truths are more violently opposed than others, and not because they are less clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

2. We may also learn that the bitter opposition made to these doctrines is altogether *unjustifiable*. It is always wrong to oppose the truth as it is in Jesus, whether we are able to comprehend it or not. One of the marks of condemnation recorded against the false teachers of old is, "speaking evil of the things that they understand not." 2 Peter ii. 12. But the sinfulness of the opposition rises in proportion to the importance of the truth, and the clearness with which it has been made known. If, then, the doctrines of grace are plainly taught in the Scriptures, if they accord with the experience of Christians, and enter largely into their prayers, then it must be exceedingly sinful to oppose and misrepresent them. Those who do this will eventually be found *fighting against God*. We have recently heard of persons praying publicly against the election of grace, and we wonder that their tongues did not cleave to the roof of their mouths in giving utterance to the horrid imprecation! Think for a moment what would have ensued if God had answered those prayers. Then all the harps above would be forever silenced, and the joy in heaven no more be renewed over the repenting sinner. Then would be the signal of a universal jubilee among the sons of hell. How would angels

weep and devils shout for joy ! for then ministers might preach, and Christians pray in vain. O how would the enemy of God and man rejoice to hear that Jehovah had abandoned his eternal purpose of mercy, and ceased to draw sinners to the Saviour ! Then hope would depart forever, and from every part of this lost world might begin the wailings of despair.

Finally ; in view of the great importance of these doctrines we may learn *our duty* respecting them. And here let me say to all who feel that they are debtors to free and sovereign mercy, you are under strong obligations to love these great “principles of the doctrine of Christ.” They unfold to you the distinguishing grace of God, and trace back your salvation to its proper source, the eternal counsels of Jehovah. They teach you to ascribe your whole salvation to God and the Lamb ; and to lay your glory at his feet. They afford ministers all their encouragement to preach, Christians all their encouragement to pray, and sinners all their encouragement to repent and believe the gospel. And they lie at the foundation of all correct views of the character of God and the way of salvation by Christ. But it is not enough that you give the truth a sincere and cordial reception. You are to labour and pray “that it may have free course” throughout the world. Listen not to the suggestion of sloth and cowardice—“truth is mighty and will prevail,” without the assistance of its friends. Mighty as it is through God, we may not expect it to advance with-

out human instrumentality. We are required according to our measure of ability, "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." If we attempt this duty in the fear of God, and with a sincere desire to promote the honour of our Divine Master, we need not regard what man can do to us. For "thus saith the Lord, Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings."

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Yes, my friends, if you suffer on account of your zeal and love for Christ, or his truth, it is your privilege to rejoice. Endeavour to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour. Thus you will gain a clearer evidence of your gracious election of God. And though your path through this world be beset with difficulty, ages of glory await you at your journey's end. When you have shed a few more tears in a strange land, your feet shall stand upon Mount Zion where you shall sing the anthem of redeeming grace. While everlasting ages roll, you will cast your crowns before the throne and swell the rapturous song: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN."









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